

The SPORTS PINK

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55p

ADKINS SAVOURS SAINTS PROMOTION

SEE PAGE 4



WE ARE GOING UP!



SAINTS 4 COVENTRY 0

SAINTS are back in the big time.

Nigel Adkins and his team secured promotion to the Premier League with a final day hammering of Coventry at St Mary's.

Any early nerves were settled by two goals in the space of three first half minutes as Billy Sharp and Jose Fonte put Saints 2-0 up.

Full of confidence and knowing that promotion was all but assured, Saints were rampant in the second half with Jos Hooiveld and Adam Lallana adding further goals.

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CLINCHER: Jos Hooiveld, centre, celebrates scoring Saints' third goal against Coventry and with it promotion to the Premier League.

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FAN-TASTIC SUPPORT

Record crowd as fans cheer Saints up!

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SAINTS



Rickie overwhelmed by promotion

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Saints Spotlight

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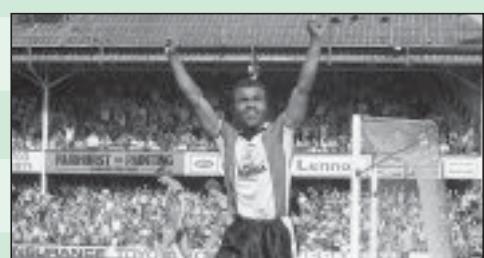
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SAINTS 4 COVENTRY 0: ADKINS' MEN SEAL

NERVELESS PROMOTED

SAINTS have been promoted to the Premier League.

Nigel Adkins and his team secured back-to-back promotions with a final day 4-0 hammering of Coventry at St Mary's.

Even before the game there seemed little hope of anything other than the win Saints needed to ensure a return to the top flight which they left seven years ago and it certainly proved that way.

Any early nerves were settled by two goals in the space of three first half minutes as Billy Sharp and Jose Fonte put Saints 2-0 up.

Full of confidence and knowing that promotion was all but assured, Saints were rampant in the second half against an already relegated Sky Blues team.

Jos Hooiveld and Adam Lallana added further goals to confirm Saints' finish in the second automatic promotion place behind champions Reading and ahead of West Ham, whose final day victory over Hull was of no consequence in the end.

Adam Leitch

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CHIEF SPORTS REPORTER

Saints were welcomed onto the pitch by an incredible reception from the record St Mary's crowd of 32,363 and when the game kicked off there was a tremendous roar.

Saints started off the game positively and were immediately pinning Coventry back.

The early signs were of few nerves from the players and instead plenty of belief.

For their part, Coventry were banking men up behind the ball with a clear intent to make themselves as hard as possible to break down.

But for all that it was Kelvin Davis who had to make the first save after some very poor defending from Saints eventually saw Gary McSheffrey get in a near post shot that needed turning behind.

Carl Baker sliced wide

when in a lot of space on 14 minutes before Saints' first effort, which was a long distance strike from Danny Fox that was a long way wide.

Saints did get the lead they had so craved on 16 minutes.

Jose Fonte broke forward from the centre of defence and fed the ball to Guly do Prado on the right.

He looked up and curled a pass back to Adam Lallana on the edge of the area who needed no second invitation to fire in a first time volley.

Joe Murphy looked to have it covered but it took a little flick off Billy Sharp, who had instinctively thrown a leg out and it deflected in for 1-0.

Promotion was virtually done and dusted just three minutes later as Saints doubled their lead. It came from a



corner as Danny Fox curled it in left footed high and looping from the right and Fonte was allowed so much space to get in a diving header.

It fired straight down into the turf and bounced too high for the man on the line, who couldn't prevent Saints from making it 2-0.

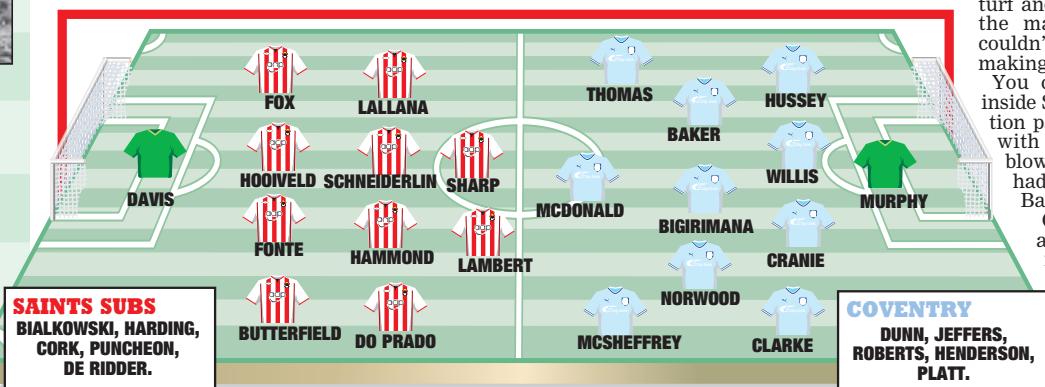
You could sense the relief inside St Mary's as the promotion party started to gear up with any initial nerves blown away, even as Davis had to make a save from Baker.

Coventry suffered yet another blow as the injured McSheffrey was forced off on 34 minutes to be replaced by 18-year-old Will Roberts.

Saints were also forced into a change through injury with

Dean Hammond limping off on 37 minutes to be replaced by Jack Cork to ensure the young midfielder had featured in every league game of the campaign.

Only a terrific block from Jordan Willis prevented Lallana making things even



NIGEL Adkins made two changes to the side which lost to Middlesbrough for the final day automatic promotion decider against Coventry City.

One change was enforced with Richard Chaplow unavailable for the game after injuring his hamstring in

TEAM NEWS

the defeat at the Riverside Stadium. He was replaced on the right of midfield by Guly do Prado.

The other change was tactical with Morgan Schneiderlin coming into the centre of the Saints midfield and

Jack Cork dropping to the bench. Jason Puncheon also got a recall to be among the subs.

As expected, 17-year-old defender Jordan Willis started his first game for Coventry with the unenviable task of keeping quiet the Championship's best strikeforce.

BACK IN THE BIG TIME: MORE SAINTS v COVENTRY REACTION,

Saints Spotlight

TOP-FLIGHT RETURN

SAINTS IN STYLE



LEFT: Jos Hooiveld scores Saints' third goal.

BELLOW: Jose Fonte celebrates making it 2-0 with Guly Do Prado and Jos Hooiveld.

RIGHT: Jos Hooiveld battles for the ball with Coventry's Conor Thomas.



more comfortable four minutes before half time.

That proved to be the final chance of the first half but when the referee's whistle went Saints went off very satisfied with their 45 minutes work as they looked to be virtually in the Premier League.

Coventry made a half-time change with Shaun Jeffers replacing Gael Bigirimana.

Do Prado had half a chance to try and get himself on the score sheet three minutes after the restart but the ball in was just a bit high and from six

yards out he headed over the bar.

Saints were looking so confident and were enjoying themselves in the second period, Rickie Lambert the next to go close with an effort from 20 yards that flashed wide.

Sharp made half an appeal for a penalty as he went down in the area but it looked optimistic and was duly waved away by referee Anthony Taylor.

It felt only a matter of time until Saints added another goal and it came on 59 minutes.

HOW THE CHAMPIONSHIP TOP 3 FINISHED...

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Reading	46	27	8	11	69	41	89
Southampton	46	26	10	10	85	46	88
West Ham United	46	24	14	8	81	48	86

It was the result of another Danny Fox right wing corner. This time it was low and Coventry failed to clear, the ball landed at the feet of Jos Hooiveld, who swivelled and finished inside the six-yard box for 3-0.

The one-sided nature of the game showed few signs of letting up as Saints bagged yet another goal just four minutes later.

It was a classic Saints move they have used so often this season.

Cork hung a high cross to the far post from the ring wing, Lambert rose highest to head back across goal and Lallana stole in to finish side footed high into the net from close range.

Coventry made another change through injury with Joe Henderson coming on for Willis.

The Sky Blues were at least trying to compete despite having so many inexperienced

players on the field and Davis had to save from Baker.

There was a standing ovation for Billy Sharp as he was replaced on 76 minutes by Steve De Ridder.

The only thing missing was a Lambert goal and he picked out Murphy from a decent opening.

Jason Puncheon got a late run out as he came on for Lallana on 83 minutes.

That proved to be the last moment of note until the final whistle went.

At that stage the fans poured onto the pitch to celebrate.

The players didn't manage to get off beforehand and were mobbed, with several being held aloft by the fans.

The scenes were utterly joyous with jubilant supporters covering every part of the pitch, just so happy and so relieved to see the club they love back in the big time after seven long years.



BATTLE: Dean Hammond in action for Saints against Coventry at St Mary's today.

ANALYSIS AND FANS' PICTURES IN MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO

Saints Spotlight

WE ARE SOUTHAMPTON, WE'RE

Gordon Simpson

gordon.simpson@dailyecho.co.uk

SPORTS REPORTER

"We are Southampton, we're Premier League."

It has taken seven years, but finally the Saints faithful are singing it again.

The cry echoed out proudly from St Mary's today and penetrated deep into the city, as the club celebrated an incredible and emotional return to the top flight.

Thousands poured onto the pitch at the end of the 4-0 demolition of Coventry, hoisting the players onto their shoulders.

It was a display of pure, unbridled joy, as every section of the club came, to put it in manager Nigel Adkins' words, together as one.

It was all in such stark contrast to the scenes on the final day of the 2004/05 season, when Manchester United played the role of executioner to Saints' Premier League life.

"We'll be back" the fans had defiantly cried after that numbing day.

Prophecy

It has taken longer than most could ever have imagined, but at last the prophecy has been fulfilled.

So much has transpired since that depressing afternoon – administration, a second relegation to League One, a ten-point deduction, and numerous managerial changes.

It has been a long and, at times, incredibly painful road.

But as the fans clambered down from the stands and lifted their heroes up in celebration, it was as if many of those miserable memories were being completely washed away.

Within seconds of the final whistle, the pitch was completely flooded with supporters.

They mobbed the players, they danced, they hugged, and they kissed the turf.

It was a glorious end to such a fantastic season.

The scenes were remarkable, as the realisation dawned that Saints are back in the big time.

Manchester United, Arsenal,



Chelsea, Liverpool – that is the company the club will now be keeping.

Even Adkins could hardly believe it.

Normally never lost for words, he could hardly speak in the minutes after the final whistle and had to choke back tears in the tunnel.

Eventually, the players fought their way through the crowds and back into the dressing room.

They sprayed champagne, they embraced each other and they sang together.

The enormity of their achievement – winning back-to-back promotions to take them from the third tier into the top flight – almost cannot be understated.

The celebrations continued as they made their way up to the directors' box, with Adkins, chairman Nicola Cortese, the backroom staff,

and the players all saluting the crowd.

Promotions have been so rare in the history of Southampton Football Club – and these moments will be treasured by those lucky enough to have been inside St Mary's.

Legacy

The only sad note was that the man who had made it all possible, Markus Liebherr, was not there to witness the iconic moment.

This was the day he had bought the club for, and the late owner's beaming smile should have graced this occasion. It would have lit up the day even more.

But his legacy still burns bright and, fittingly, he was not forgotten.

Liebherr's name was chanted throughout the match, and it boomed out from the enormous sea of fans on the pitch after the game began.

It was a poignant and heartfelt display of affection from the supporters.

Although there had been the potential for tension and nerves, the overwhelming atmosphere before the game had been one of excitement.

Supporters knew the club stood on the brink of the top flight. There was no doom mongering, simply an air of expectancy.

And the players delivered in style.

The ground erupted when Adam Lallana's volley deflected off Billy Sharp and found the net to put Saints in front.

Any concern that had existed immediately disappeared.

And when Jose Fonte headed a second moments later, the party really began.

Saints weren't going to let it slip from that point, and the fans knew it. They belted out chant after chant and bounced up and down in celebration.

By the time the second half started, it was clear that the club were only heading in one direction.

Jos Hooiveld's goal and a deserved strike for the mesmerising Lallana served as the icing and the cherry on the most delicious of cakes.

Boos

The announcement that a record crowd of 32,363 had piled into the stadium brought a huge cheer.

The only boos that rang out came when the most pointless announcement of the season was relayed over the tannoy.

"Please remain in your seats at the final whistle," the voice pleaded. No chance.

Minutes before the end, the fans were already piling down the steps to the advertising boards.

As soon as the whistle was lifted to referee Anthony Taylor's mouth, the invasion began.

It was a magnificent moment, and one that will live long in the memory of all who were part of it.

Saints are back in the big time...



ADKINS: MY SAINTS PRIDE

SAINTS manager Nigel Adkins declared himself a "happy man" as the Saints thrashed Coventry 4-0 to secure promotion to the Barclays Premier League.

Two goals from Adam Lallana and further efforts from Billy Sharp and Jos Hooiveld ensured the Saints cleared the final hurdle with ease, ultimately finishing only one

point behind npower Championship champions Reading.

Asked to sum up his feelings amid a mass pitch invasion at the final whistle, Adkins, pictured right, said: "Pride, too right it's pride."

"A lot of people put a lot of hard work in, and for the players trying to get off the pitch now, being

mobbed by our fantastic supporters, they deserve all the plaudits they get. Since I joined the football club, they've been tremendous."

"Everybody at this football club has worked their socks off and deserve all the praise they get."

"I'm very proud and honoured. We've put a lot of hard work in so it's good. I'm a happy man."

BACK IN THE BIG TIME: EMAIL YOUR CELEBRATION

Saints Spotlight

PREMIER LEAGUE



I've got unfinished business – Davis

KELVIN Davis said it was "unreal" to win promotion to the Premier League.

Davis, who had a spell in the top flight with Sunderland in 2005-06 but endured a difficult time, added that he cannot wait to return.

"It's the top division, it's where we all want to play and try our skills and see if we can deal with it," he said.

"I for one feel like I have unfinished business in there, and my message to the lads is just to grasp the opportunity."



The goalkeeper, pictured, was also keen to ensure Nigel Adkins got his share of the praise, with the manager so often keen to deflect it on to others.

"He's done brilliantly since he's been here. He's very calm, very collected, and his preparation is second to none," he said.

"He lets the lads manage themselves as well, we've all got a voice and if we've got something to say we can say it. He's a good communicator. He deserves everything he gets."

Lambert: I'm overwhelmed

RICKIE Lambert said he was 'overwhelmed' by Saints' promotion to the Premier League.

The striker crowned another marvellous campaign by being named the *Daily Echo* Player of the Season and snatching automatic promotion to the top flight.

It's a remarkable turnaround for Lambert who looked like he wouldn't ever play above League One level until Alan Pardew paid £1m to bring him to Saints where he has been phenomenal.

"I can't believe it. I can't describe this – it's overwhelming," said Lambert after Saints sealed promotion with a 4-0 win over Coventry.

"It's been a long road for me personally.

"To get here means everything."

Saints Spotlight



SAINTS have received tremendous backing – home and away – from their fans all season. Here are just a small selection of the supporters pictured outside St Mary's ahead of the promotion-clinching victory over Coventry.



WE'RE IN THE
PREMIER LEAGUE!
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Daily Echo pictures by Stuart Martin



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Saints Spotlight



WE'RE IN THE
PREMIER LEAGUE!



MORE FANS' PICTURES WILL APPEAR IN MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO

Saints Spotlight

Ex-Saint condemns Pompey to final loss

DEXTER Blackstock's second-half brace secured victory for Nottingham Forest as Portsmouth bid farewell to the npower Championship with a 2-0 defeat.

The former Saints striker has barely featured for Forest this season having missed over a year of action with knee ligament damage, but he ended the campaign on a high with his seventh and eighth goals.

Garath McCleary, who was crowned the supporters' player of the year prior to kick-off, reached Andy Reid's cross and provided Blackstock with a simple tap-in to open the scoring 20 minutes from time.

The forward, pictured below, then missed a trio of headers in quick succession with Pompey goalkeeper Jamie Ashdown epitomising their fighting spirit with three smart saves. But he was a constant thorn in Portsmouth's side and was rewarded again in the 89th minute with another simple finish after Greg Cunningham's shot came straight to him.

Michael Appleton's side, whose relegation was confirmed with a 2-1 defeat to Derby last week, will now drop into the third tier for the first time since 1983.

Forest came into the game having scored just 19 times in 22 games at the City Ground and their profligacy was evident early on.

There may have been nothing riding on the game's outcome but tempers flared at successive corners between home full-back Chris Gunter and Derby loanee Chris Maguire.

The former went to ground following a tussle with Maguire and appeared to retaliate moments later by elbowing the Pompey striker, although the incident was not picked up by the officials.

Early in the second half Gunter dispossessed Kelvin Etuhu and squared for Blackstock in space but the striker snatched his chance and the ball flew over the crossbar.

He did make amends, though, when Forest finally broke the deadlock.

Reid's far-post cross found McCleary and he kept his composure to slide the ball across for Blackstock who could not miss.

He nearly doubled his tally but found Ashdown in inspired form with the stopper denying three of Blackstock's headers as Forest piled on the pressure.

If one moment summed up Portsmouth's season it came in the 85th minute. Lee Camp made a mess of Maguire's corner, fumbling the ball onto the crossbar and into his own net but the assistant ruled the ball had already gone out of play as it came in.

And Blackstock heaped more misery on the south coast club with his second goal.

Cunningham met Reid's corner and Blackstock showed his predatory instincts, pouncing inside a crowded six-yard box to squeeze the loose ball in.



VIEW FROM THE STANDS By Dan Kerins

THAT was the season that was and now it is nothing but something you'll find in history books.

But before the body of 2011/12 is cold, let's look back and pick out the best bits.

As previously mentioned in these pages, only the most optimistic expected Saints to be in the top two at any meaningful point in the season, let alone all if it.

Coming up from League 1, it just seemed a bit fanciful to think we were going to arrive in the Championship and dominate sides – but we did just that.

The opening game against Leeds was a real statement of intent – and a bit of a shock if truth be told.

Leeds haven't been a bad side over the last couple of years, so to just blow them away was a pleasant surprise and it set the tone for much of the season.

The big away win at Ipswich was another big marker which suggested Saints were more than comfortable in the higher division, but for me it was a month later when I actually dared to dream about what we might achieve.

RUN WILD

The demolition of Birmingham at St Mary's was a result that suddenly allowed imaginations to run wild. Taking apart a team like Brum was a massive statement.

And so it continued. Watford, West Ham, Middlesbrough. All were brushed aside at St. Mary's.

Chaplow's injury in December coincided with a wobble – points were dropped, the consecutive home wins record lost and the failure to hold on to the lead at Fratton Park.

Lambert being banned for three games after a very dubious decision at the Amex certainly didn't help either.

Was it just a temporary blip or had the bubble burst, like the inner pessimist suggested it would?

By the middle of February, we had our answer as Saints began to find their feet again, buoyed by the acquisition of Billy Sharp and



BEERS AND CHEERS:
Saints fans celebrate their side's promotion at a packed King Alfred pub in Northam this afternoon.

Daily Echo pics by Chris Moorhouse. Order no: 14310021 and 14310047

Tadanari Lee.

Saints had dropped points during that spell, but so had others – we were still top.

Then along came another run: Ten games unbeaten until the debacle at Bloomfield Road in March.

You can talk about the TV curse all you want but sometimes Saints have a tendency to perhaps be a bit naive and that was one such time.

But they dusted themselves off again. The last-gasp equaliser



against Pompey was annoying, more so for who it was against rather than what it meant for the promotion charge, but the level of celebration from that lot down the road was quite something to behold.

The Reading game however was by far the most annoying of the season. We surrendered top spot and ultimately the title that night. But we'd played a lot better than we had been doing and I'd argue Saints were the better side on the night. They had three chances

and three goals. You have to admit, that's clinical and when you compare it to the number of chances we created - yet only converted one.

We bounced back against Peterborough, only to blow it against Middlesbrough – for many the last week has been the longest they've ever known as a Saints fan.

And that brings us to Coventry – and you don't need me to remind you how that went!

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Saints Spotlight



Royals' suffer title hangover

CHAMPIONS Reading saw their promotion party tainted somewhat as they fell to only a second defeat in 19 at the hands of a Birmingham side who go into the play-offs full of confidence.

The loss, however, will be the last thing on the minds of Reading's players and staff when they deservedly lift the npower Championship trophy back in Berkshire tomorrow after a superb season on the back of last May's play-off agony at Wembley.

But Birmingham, unbeaten in nine, will take great heart from the triumph, which crucially moves them up into fourth place and with home advantage in the second leg of the play-offs against Blackpool – with the first leg at Bloomfield Road next Friday.

Substitute Adam Rooney grabbed the opener in the 24th minute before Pablo Ibanez, having twice cleared off the line, headed against a post.

Blues goalkeeper Colin Doyle kept out Ian Harte from the spot, and it was left for Wade Elliott, pictured, to seal victory with a penalty of his own.

City could have inflicted Reading's heaviest defeat of the season in injury time but Elliott saw a second spot-kick parried away by Adam Federici.

The early entertainment came courtesy of the 4,134 Reading faithful who were well and truly in party mood, with a host of inflatables making their way on to the pitch in the early stages.

Royals frontman Simon Church almost immediately opened the scoring with a well-taken volley which flew narrowly over the crossbar.

But it was Blues who broke the deadlock midway through the half as Rooney converted from the middle of the penalty area after a great break down the left by Nathan Redmond.

The promising 18-year-old

whistled a shot of his own narrowly over but it was the hosts who were soon clearing their lines.

Adam Le Fondre was clattered by Curtis Davies, with appeals for a penalty, but the ball passed Doyle and had to be hacked off the line by Ibanez.

The Spaniard again came to Blues' rescue before the break as he cleared off the line for a second time from Le Fondre.

And Ibanez almost make an impact at the other end on the stroke of half-time, his header from Elliott's right-wing free-kick coming off a post.

In the second half Ibanez needlessly climbed over Alex Pearce to concede the first penalty of the game.

Yet Doyle made a superb save to his right to keep out Harte.

And the game was soon wrapped up in the 75th minute as Jay Tabb was penalised for handball, leaving Elliott to fire home from the spot.

Great title deciders

MONDAYS Manchester derby at the Etihad Stadium is set to play a pivotal role in the fight for the 2011-12 Barclays Premier League title. Here, the Sports Pink takes a look at five other memorable title deciders.

Liverpool 0 Arsenal 2
Anfield, May 26 1989

Arguably the most dramatic conclusion there has ever been to a title race. George Graham's Gunners headed to leaders Liverpool for their final game needing to win by two goals to snatch the title from the Reds. Alan Smith gave Arsenal the lead shortly after half-time but they looked set to come up short until Michael Thomas struck in injury time to give them the title on goals scored.

Rangers 2 Celtic 2
Ibrox, May 21, 1967

Celtic headed into this Old Firm clash a point clear with two games remaining, while for Rangers this was their final fixture of the season. Needing a win to keep their title hopes alive Rangers took the lead through Sandy Jardine, but a Jimmy Johnstone double meant Roger Hynd's late equaliser was not enough for the hosts. Celtic went on to win the European Cup later that month.

Newcastle 0 Manchester United 1
St James' Park, March 4 1996

In this title battle, best remembered for Kevin Keegan's infamous "I'd love it if we beat them" rant, Newcastle had been 12 points clear of United at one stage. But that advantage had slowly dwindled and Eric Cantona's winner in this game gave the Red Devils all the momentum they needed. Two weeks later United went top of the table to take a lead they never relinquished.

Manchester United 0 Arsenal 1
Old Trafford, March 14 1998

United held the advantage in the league table heading into this fixture, but Arsenal were within range thanks to an impressive run and having three games in hand. Marc Overmars grabbed the only goal of the game by slotting through the legs of Peter Schmeichel as Arsene Wenger's side went on to claim the title.

Real Madrid 0 Barcelona 2
Bernabeu, April 10 2010

This remarkably tight and tense title battle in the Primera Division ultimately ended in Real boss Manuel Pellegrini losing his job, despite guiding the club to a record points haul of 96. The three points that they missed out on for La Liga glory came from this fixture at the start of April. A typically feisty encounter was settled in favour of Barca, who lost just one league game all season, by strikes from Lionel Messi and Pedro.

SAM CONFIDENT OF PLAY-OFF SUCCESS

SAM Allardyce vowed to take West Ham up via the play-offs after they missed out on automatic promotion back to the Barclays Premier League.

Southampton's win over Coventry ensured the south-coast side held onto second spot and followed Reading into the top flight despite the Hammers beating Hull 2-1.

Instead Allardyce's men will have to do it the hard way, starting with two legs against Cardiff, if they are to secure promotion.

Allardyce said: "I stuck my neck out when I arrived and said we wanted promotion in the first season.

"I've got a two-year contract but doing it in the first season is important. We still have three games to win, and we will do it."

"We've had a very good season considering where we've come from. In the last few years 86 points has been enough. Our ultimate goal was not achieved, we left ourselves too much to do, but we'll wake up tomorrow morning and look forward to

FINAL CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE						
	P	W	D	L	A	Pts
Reading	46	27	8	11	69	41
Southampton	46	26	10	10	85	46
West Ham	46	24	14	8	81	48
Birmingham	46	20	16	10	78	51
Blackpool	46	20	15	11	79	50
Cardiff City	46	19	18	9	66	53
Middlesbrough	46	18	16	12	52	51
Hull City	46	19	11	16	47	44
Leicester City	46	18	12	16	66	55
Brighton	46	17	15	14	52	66
Watford	46	16	16	14	56	64
Derby County	46	18	10	18	50	58
Burnley	46	17	11	18	61	58
Leeds United	46	17	10	19	65	68
Ipswich Town	46	17	10	19	69	77
Millwall	46	15	12	19	55	57
Crystal Palace	46	13	17	16	46	51
Peterborough	46	13	13	22	67	77
Notts Forest	46	14	8	24	48	63
Bristol City	46	12	13	21	44	68
Barnsley	46	13	9	24	49	74
Portsmouth	46	13	11	22	50	59
Coventry City	46	9	13	24	41	65
Doncaster	46	8	12	26	43	80

preparing for the play-offs.

"We have to lick our wounds, get over our disappointment and get ready for the vital games ahead of us."

It is West Ham's home form which has proved costly – they won a club record 13 games on the road but dropped 28 points on their own turf to slip out of the top two. An early goal may have set the nerves jangling down at St Mary's, and they should have grabbed one in the

fourth minute only for Ricardo Vaz Te to somehow head wide from all of three yards out.

And any scrap of pre-match optimism around Upton Park quickly evaporated as the news Saints were making short work of the Sky Blues filtered through.

Nevertheless, goals either side of half-time from Carlton Cole should at least send West Ham into the play-offs in good heart.

The striker headed in Mark Noble's 35th-minute corner to open the scoring and tucked away Henri Lansbury's cross for the second three minutes after the break.

Hull pulled one back through Corry Evans, who took advantage of Guy Demel's poor header to nod the ball past Rob Green.

And the visitors thought they had equalised when Richard Garcia powered in a late header only to be flagged offside.

The Tigers' own

play-off hopes ended a few weeks ago but manager Nicky Barmby feels they can go one better next season.

"There's a bit of frustration," admitted the former England international. "I genuinely believed we could make the play-offs."

"But the players are growing and we'll be better for it next season."



CONFIDENT:
West Ham
boss Sam
Allardyce.

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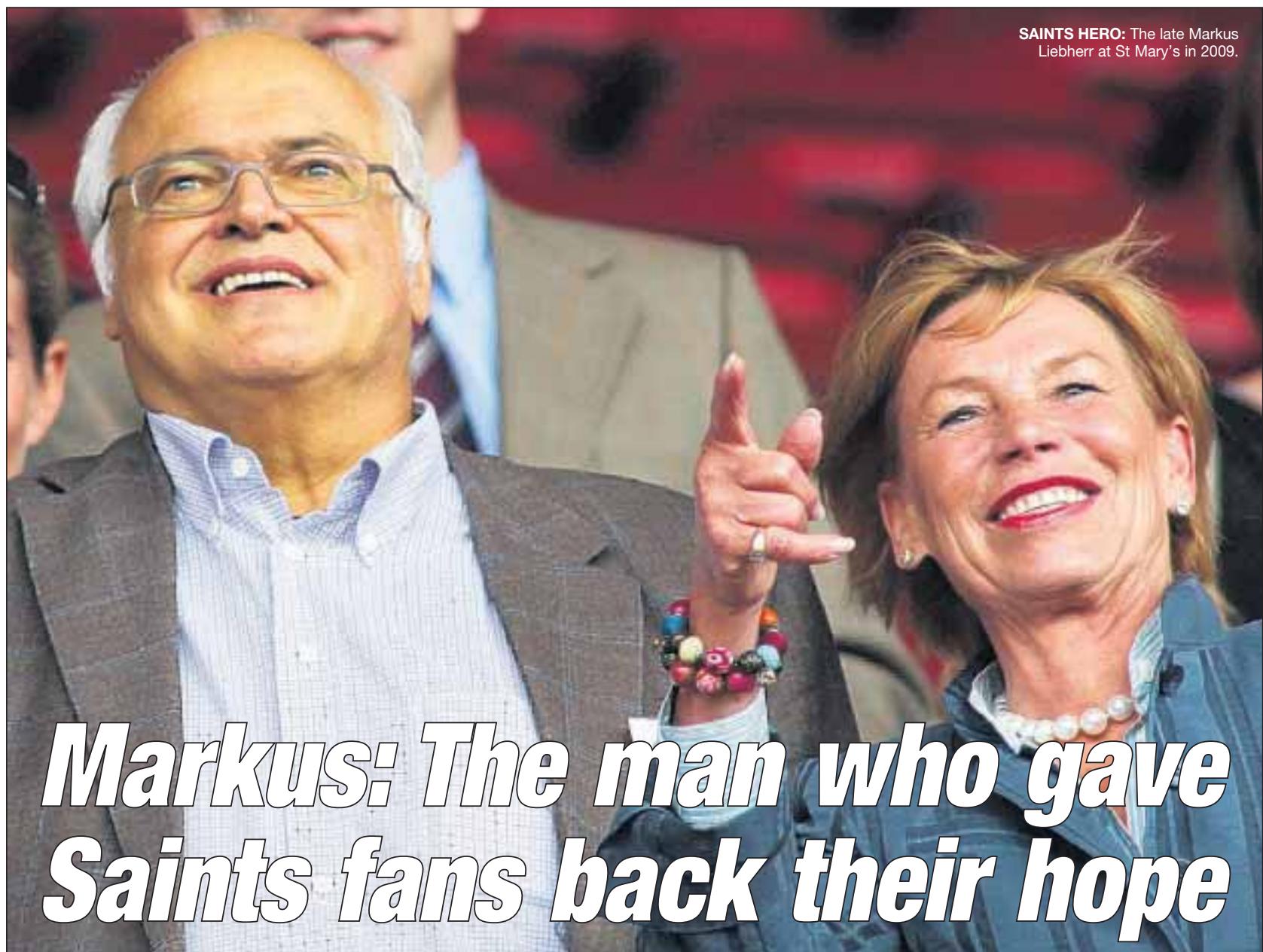
Daily Echo

MORE SAINTS NEWS IN MONDAY'S ECHO

BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

SOUTH
BY DAREN WHEELER

SAINTS HERO: The late Markus Liebherr at St Mary's in 2009.



Markus: The man who gave Saints fans back their hope

THIS week's Beautiful South column comes to you via our matchday sponsors, Hindsight.

By the time you read this Saints will either have taken their rightful place as runners up in the championship or will be gearing themselves up for the nightmare that is the playoffs.

If there is any justice in the world, Saints will be runners up – they've been in the top two all season and it would brutally unfair if West Ham nip in at the last minute to snatch promotion from under our noses.

Nothing in life is guaranteed and nothing is fair, but you can't help but think that for nothing else but the football they've played all season Saints deserve promotion over a leaden, dull West Ham side.

The lead up to the Coventry game has given rise to all the traits that you'd expect from a Saints fan.

From total belief that we can overcome all obstacles to achieve what seemed impossible earlier on, to abject scepticism that somehow Saints will conspire

to screw it all up.

Writing this article on a Thursday, the stats can't be argued with.

One of the best home records against one of the worst away records at St Marys and one of the worst home records amongst the top Championship teams versus one of the tightest defences in the league at Upton Park.

On paper then, the outcome should be easy to predict. But this is Championship football.

It's true that a relegated team will play with a freedom they never previously had, but they also aren't quite up for the fight like a team with something to play for.

The most decisive moment in Saturday's game will be the first tackle.

For many of the Coventry players, the summer will be one of trying to avoid playing for Coventry in League One. Would any of them put their foot in for a club they might not want to be with come the next season?

If Saints have that innate belief that this is their time, then the outcome should be in no doubt. But fate has no time for com-

placency and should the game be tied come half time, Saturday's game could be unbelievably tight.

I'm an archetypal Saints fan. My mood varies from: "We can rule the world!" to: "We're going to screw it up" on a hormonal basis.

We've been so used to snatching defeat from the jaws of victory that we're unaccustomed to actually being rather good.

Since Nicola Cortese arrived at this club we've had unprecedented success and we've become a slick, professional outfit with a manager who leaves nothing to chance.

We've won 25 games, drawn 10 and lost ten, scoring more goals than any other team in the league.

If you think about it the rise of Southampton Football club has been nothing short of epic. When Cortese took over Saints were on -10 points and surely facing another relegation to League 2.

In that season they not only survived relegation but finished just outside the playoffs and won their first piece of silverware in 30 years.

No matter what anyone tells you, that

was quite simply an astonishing achievement.

The next season saw us sweep most teams aside and we were unlucky to not to pip Brighton for the title.

This season has seen Saints step up a gear and, if you exclude the televised games, they have been the most attractive, fluent footballing side in this league.

The transformation from perpetual losers to an attractive, stable, debt free club has been surely one of the great turnarounds of English football.

Win, lose or draw; go up or stay down, this season, like the two prior to it, have been simply sensational and have given me some of my best memories as a Saints fan.

We've seen our arch rivals decimated by debt and reckless spending and seen our own club rise phoenix-like from the ashes and become a bright, vibrant club with an even brighter future.

For that I will always be grateful to the late Markus Liebherr and Nicola Cortese for giving Saints fans the one thing they haven't had over the last four years... hope.

Paine's World

The Saints legend's **EXCLUSIVE** column on all things football



Stand-in boss has done the business



BOSS: Roberto Di Matteo.

IT was on a rainy night in Moscow in 2008 when John Terry lost his footing, costing Chelsea the chance of winning the European Cup.

On Tuesday night, the Chelsea captain, pictured below, lost his head when delivering a ludicrous knee in the back of Barcelona striker Alexis Sanchez.

His instant dismissal left the ten-men of Chelsea with a mountain so imposing to climb that even the bravest of mountaineers would have balked at the challenge.

Terry can make all the apologies he likes – the fact remains he let his teammates, the club and himself down.

Terry is the bedrock at the heart of Chelsea's defence, and has made over 500 appearances for the club.

His leadership qualities are well documented, both for club and country.

But this season has been a difficult one.

In October, he was accused by QPR defender Anton Ferdinand of racial abuse during a Premier League match.

Terry, who has denied the charge, will go on trial in July, immediately after the European Championships in Ukraine and Poland.

With Gary Cahill, Terry's defensive partner, already injured with a hamstring problem, the dismissal of Terry looked to have put paid to the London club's chances.

Yet Roberto Di Matteo's side regrouped to stage a remarkable fightback.

Two goals down, through Sergio Busquets and Andres Iniesta, Chelsea launched a rare attack, and when Frank Lampard released the Brazilian, Ramires, with an exquisite through ball, the Chelsea midfielder brilliantly chipped the on-rushing Victor Valdes from 15 yards to bring his team back into the game right on the stroke of half-time.

The second half resumed with Chelsea defending for their lives.

Such was their dominance in the possession stakes that Barcelona had 72 per cent of the ball in both the away and home legs.

The pressure took its toll when the ever-willing Didier Drogba tripped Cesc Fabregas in the penalty area.

Up stepped the world's number one, Lionel Messi, to take the spot kick.

His 14 goals in the Champions League this season was just one

off the record for a single campaign.

But, to the dismay of the near 90,000 Barca supporters at the Camp Nou, Messi unbelievably lashed his penalty against the crossbar.

This from a player who has scored 63 goals this season.

Chelsea could breathe again. It was a let-off, but one they seized upon.

Their thin blue line continued to thwart a Barcelona team that eventually started to tire and run out of ideas.

Although they were camping on the edge of the Chelsea box, they had no Plan B to fall back on, forcing coach Pep Guardiola to admit they may have to change their tactics in the future.

To add to the Spanish team's dismay, a long punt out of defence found Fernando Torres completely on his own.

The £50m striker, who has had a lean time since his arrival at Stamford Bridge, galloped forward to side step Valdes and secure

victory for his brave side.

Torres, by the way, became the 19th player in Champions League history to score against both Real Madrid and Barcelona, and is the first Spaniard to do so.

Chelsea's success brings huge financial assistance in the form of television cash, reportedly in the region of £45m, with opportunities to double that from ticket sales, sponsorship and merchandise.

Chelsea's opponents in the final will be Bayern Munich, after the German side beat Jose Mourinho's Real Madrid on penalties.

Bayern, who are chasing a fifth win in the competition, will now have home advantage and are the first club since Roma in 1984 to play a European final on their own soil.

Unfortunately for the Italians, they were beaten 4-2 on penalties by Liverpool.

The final, to be played on May 19, will be missing vital players from both sides.

UEFA rules insist there is no amnesty for bookings received in the semi-finals – a decision that lags behind FIFA.

The world governing body amended that rule two years ago, so I can't see why UEFA have not implemented it.

Just imagine the outcry if Barcelona and Real Madrid had made the final, only to have the world's best players, Messi and Ronaldo, ineligible.

Premier League title fight has been a classic

ACCORDING to Sir Alex Ferguson, next Monday's fixture against bitter rivals Manchester City is the most important in his 25 years at the club.

The loss to Wigan and the pulsating 4-4 draw against Everton has allowed City the chance to top the table come Monday night, even if it would only be on goal difference. They are currently six goals better off than United.

While the Premier League leaders have had a dip in form, City have strung three wins together, scoring 12 goals in the process, to reduce the gap to three points.

Manchester United's supporters and players won't forget the 6-1 hammering they received at the hands of Roberto Mancini's side earlier in the season, although they had defender Jonny Evans sent off on that occasion.

United went a long way to repairing the damage by beating City 3-2 at the Etihad Stadium in the FA Cup, when it was the turn of City's captain, Vincent Kompany, to receive his marching orders.

To win on the day may come down to who keeps 11 men on the field when passions begin to ignite – and they will.

My interest will be focused on the striking partnerships from both sides.

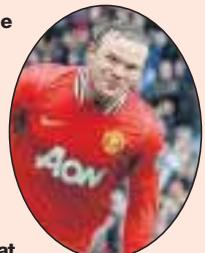
I have been particularly impressed by the Wayne Rooney, pictured, and Danny Welbeck pairing.

This all-England duo are beginning to form a potent partnership.

To counter this, City's pairing of Sergio Aguero and Carlos Tevez is starting to click.

Tevez is obviously in line for special attention this week, having crossed the Manchester divide to join City. Manchester United, for me, are still in the driving seat and remain favourites in my book to win the title.

For City, Monday night is a must-win game. Failure to do so will still leave City bemoaning the fact that the last time they won the league title was way back in 1968.



Saints Spotlight

SAINTS' FIRST TEAM FIXTURES AND RESULTS 2011/12


AUGUST

Sat 6 Leeds	H	W 3-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Martin	Harding	Do Prado**	Hammond*** 1	Cork	Lallana 1	Lambert	Connolly* 1	De Ridder*	Chaplow**	Schneiderlin***
Tues 9 Torquay (CC1).....	H	W 4-1	Bialkowski	Butterfield	Seaborne	Martin	Dickson	Do Prado*	Chaplow 1	Schneiderlin	Holmes*	Lambert 1	Do Prado*** 1	Chaplow*	Hammond**	Forte***
Sat 13 Barnsley	A	W 1-0	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Seaborne	Harding	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana**	Lambert 1	Connolly** 1	Chaplow*	Hammond**	Schneiderlin***
Tues 16 Ipswich	A	W 5-2	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Seaborne	Harding	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana**	Lambert 2	Connolly** 1	Chaplow*	Hammond**	De Ridder***
Sat 20 Millwall	H	W 1-0	Davis	Richardson*	Fonte	Seaborne	Harding	Do Prado 1	Hammond	Cork	Lallana**	Lambert	Connolly 1	Do Prado*** 1	Chaplow*	Schneiderlin***
Sat 27 Leicester	A	L 2-3	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Seaborne	Harding	Do Prado**	Hammond	Cork	Lallana**	Lambert	Do Prado*** 1	Lambert* 1	Hammond**	De Ridder***
Tues 30 Swindon (CC2)....	A	W 3-1	Bialkowski	Richardson	Seaborne	Martin	Harding	Holmes**	Schneiderlin	Cork	Lallana	Forte* 1				Hoskins***

SEPTEMBER

Sat 10 Nottm Forest	H	W 3-2	Davis	Cork	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond*** 1	Hammond	Lallana	Lambert 3	Connolly**	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	Schneiderlin***
Sun 18 Birmingham	H	W 4-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld** 1	Dickson	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork**	Lallana*** 1	Lambert 1	Connolly** 1	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	De Ridder***
Wed 21 Preston (CC3) ..	H	W 2-1	Bialkowski	Butterfield	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Reeves	Reeves	Forte***	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	Lambert***
Sat 24 Burnley	A	D 1-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lambert	Lambert	Connolly**	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	De Ridder***
Wed 28 Cardiff	A	L 1-2	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork**	Lambert	Lambert	Connolly**	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	

OCTOBER

Sat 1 Watford	H	W 4-0	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	De Ridder*	Hammond	Cork**	Lallana***	Lambert 2	Do Prado 1	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	Schneiderlin***
Sat 15 Derby	A	D 1-1	Davis	Richardson**	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado***	Hammond	Cork	Lambert 1	Connolly**	De Ridder*	Hammond**	Cork***	Harding***
Tues 18 West Ham	H	W 1-0	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld 1	Fox	Do Prado***	Hammond	Cork	Lambert	Lambert 1	Connolly**	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	De Ridder***
Sat 22 Reading	A	D 1-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte*	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado***	Hammond	Cork	Lambert	Lambert	Connolly**	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	Schneiderlin***
Tues 25 Crystal Palace (CC4) ..	A	L 0-2	Bialkowski	Butterfield	Martin	Cork	Harding	De Ridder*	Ward-Prowse	Cork	Holmes***	Reeves	Barnard*	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	Do Prado***
Sat 29 Middlesbrough	H	W 3-0	Davis	Butterfield	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado***	Hammond***	Cork	Lambert**	Lambert	Connolly* 1	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	De Ridder***

NOVEMBER

Tues 1 Peterborough	H	W 2-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld 1	Harding	Chaplow*** 1	Hammond	Schneiderlin	Lallana**	Lambert	Do Prado 1	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	Schneiderlin***
Sat 5 Coventry	A	W 4-2	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Chaplow 1	Hammond	Cork	Lallana*** 1	Lambert 1	Connolly**	De Ridder*	Hammond**	Cork***
Sat 19 Brighton	H	W 3-0	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Chaplow 1	Hammond	Cork	Lambert 3	Lambert	Connolly**	De Ridder**	Hammond**	Barnard***
Sat 26 Bristol City	A	L 0-2	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Chaplow 1	Hammond	Cork	Lambert	Lambert	Connolly**	De Ridder**	Hammond**	Barnard***
Tues 29 Hull	H	W 2-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Chaplow 1	Hammond	Cork*	Lallana 1	Lambert	Do Prado** 2	Chaplow*	Chaplow**	De Ridder***

DECEMBER

Sat 3 Doncaster	A	L 0-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	De Ridder*	Hammond	Cork**	Lallana	Schneiderlin	Do Prado*	Holmes*	Barnard**	
Sat 10 Blackpool	H	D 2-2	Bialkowski	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox*	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana	Lambert 2	Do Prado*	De Ridder*	Harding**	Barnard**
Sun 18 Portsmouth	A	D 1-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana	Lambert 1	Do Prado 2	Do Prado*	Harding*	Cork***
Mon 26 Crystal Palace	H	W 2-0	Davis	Richardson***	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana	Lambert	Do Prado 2	Do Prado*	Hammond**	Holmes***
Fri 30 Bristol City	H	L 0-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	De Ridder	Hammond	Cork	Lallana	Lambert	Do Prado**	Do Prado*	Hammond**	

JANUARY

Mon 2 Brighton	A	L 0-3	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado**	Hammond	Cork**	Lallana	Lambert	Do Prado*	De Ridder*	Connolly**	
Sat 7 Coventry (FAC 3) ..	A	W 2-1	Bialkowski	Harding***	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana	Lambert 3	Do Prado** 1	De Ridder*	Connolly**	Reeves***
Sat 14 Notts Forest	A	W 3-0	Davis	Harding**	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana**	Lambert	Do Prado** 1	De Ridder**	Connolly**	Barnard***
Mon 23 Leicester	H	L 0-2	Davis	Harding	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana**	Lambert 1	Do Prado** 1	De Ridder**	Connolly**	Reeves***
Sat 28 Millwall (FAC) ..	A	W 4-0	Davis	Harding	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana**	Lambert	Do Prado** 1	De Ridder**	Connolly**	Barnard***
Tues 31 Cardiff	H	D 1-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana**	Lambert	Do Prado** 3	Lee**	Hammond**	Shaw***

FEBRUARY

Sat 4 Birmingham	A	D 0-0	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Martin	Fox	Puncheon**	Schneiderlin	Cork***	Lallana	Lambert	Connolly*	Sharp*	Do Prado*	Hammond***
Tues 7 Millwall (FAC replay) ..	H	L 2-3	Bialkowski	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox*	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork**	Lallana 1	Lambert 2	Do Prado*	Lee*	Reeves**	Barnard***
Sat 11 Burnley	A	W 2-0	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana 1	Lambert 1	Do Prado**	Sharp*	Reeves**	Lee***
Tues 14 West Ham	A	D 1-1	Davis	Richardson**	Fonte	Hooiveld 1	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana 1	Lambert	Do Prado**	Sharp***	Puncheon*	Hammond***
Sat 18 Derby	H	W 4-0	Davis	Harding	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana 1	Lambert	Do Prado**	Sharp**	Puncheon*	Lee**
Sat 25 Watford	A	W 3-0	Davis	Butterfield	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana 1	Lambert	Do Prado**	Sharp***	Connolly**	

MARCH

Sat 3 Leeds	A	W 1-0	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox***	Chaplow*	Cork	Schneiderlin	Puncheon*	Lambert 1	Lee**	Hammond*	Do Prado**	Harding***
Tues 6 Ipswich	H	D 1-1	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana*** 2	Lambert 1	Lee**	Sharp**	Cork***	Sharp***
Sat 10 Barnsley	A	W 2-0	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Do Prado*	Hammond	Cork	Lallana**	Lambert	Lee**	Connolly**	Sharp***	Connolly**
Sat 17 Millwall	A	W 3-2	Davis	Richardson	Fonte	Hooiveld 1	Fox***	Puncheon**	Cork	Schneiderlin	Lallana***	Lambert 3	Do Prado*	Sharp**	De Ridder*	Sharp***
Tues 20 Hull	A	W 2-0	Davis	Richard												

Adam Rant

This week's big talking points
with Adam Leitch

Snooker's old guard still reign supreme

IT has been a fascinating start to the World Snooker championships where the old guard have been on top.

All the talk of the standard of the game being raised so considerably year on year gets on Adam Rant's nerves, because it's hard to justify.

A golden generation of Stephen Hendry, Ronnie O'Sullivan, John Higgins, Mark Williams, the late Paul Hunter and Matthew Stevens have yet to be surpassed.

All right, there are some decent players that have come through the ranks – and to suggest otherwise would be unfair.

But the quality in depth that these guys boasted in their prime is still awesome and as good as it has got.

Most of them are knocking on now, they are pretty wealthy and not all that interested in touring the world for most of the season collecting ranking points,

therefore they are not going to be in the higher echelons of that particular part of the system.

But what they will still do is attempt to qualify for snooker's 'big ones' and try and win those.

The fact that we have seen many of them succeeding so far in Sheffield, and defeating

the seeded players who are playing week in and week out, just goes to show that thoughts that a new generation of snooker players who have raised the bar considerably is just incorrect.

Even without as much effort the old guard are still superb.

It's hard to love Chelsea's stars

SOME things in life are black and white, others in shades of grey.

The latter was Adam Rant's reaction to Chelsea edging out Barcelona to make it to the Champions League final.

It is fantastic to see an English side make the final of what has arguably become the most important tournament in the world.

The way Chelsea did it was also marvellous, simply working so hard, putting themselves on the line and displaying a bit of quality when they needed it.

Their win was a thrilling victory and, no matter what may be said in Spain, a deserved one.

Football is not all about beautiful passing football, it's about doing the dirty things and the horrible stuff well too.

Perhaps Adam Rant looks at things through his defender's eyes at times, but a brilliant challenge is just as wonderful to watch as a Messi trick.

You wouldn't have one without the other, it's what makes the game wondrous and, like bitter defenders the world over, Adam Rant will say they don't get the credit they deserve for winning headers, holding a good line and generally getting stuck in.

For all of that though, and despite Chelsea deserving it in a footballing sense, there was still a nagging feeling that morally they didn't.

Everybody loves Barcelona, well, other than Real Madrid fans. Everybody loves their approach, the way the club is run, the players and their attitudes, the way they play. The whole place is so vibrant it's hard not to get carried along with it all.

Chelsea on the other hand don't engender those feelings in Adam Rant.

Looking at their players celebrating on the pitch at the Nou



HAPPY CHAPPIES: Chelsea players celebrate their defeat of Barcelona in the Champions League semi-final.

Camp was a reminder that I don't actually like many of them very much.

And the news that John Terry will be allowed to lift the Champions League trophy should win it hasn't helped either.

To be fair to Terry he produced as big a laugh as Adam Rant has managed all week when Geoff Shreeves of Sky Sports explained the Chelsea skipper's feeble

excuse for getting sent off. It was a piece of magic compared with the reality which was he had been caught doing something stupid.

Later, of course, Terry was forced to hold his hands up and admit his error.

Apparently the TV replays had shown something very different to his version of events, but to be fair to him, he was only the one there on the pitch who did it, how could

he possibly have known what he had done without the aid of TV replays?

Add to all this Chelsea's owner, the way the club is run and some of the distasteful things that have gone on there and you paint a sorry picture of this English club.

Does Adam Rant want Chelsea to beat Bayern Munich in the final? Probably, but it's shades of grey when it should be black and white.

Pundits now have to be a Jack of all trades

ADAM Rant didn't appear in last week's Pink but he has unusually remembered something he would have liked to mention.

You may recall his incredulity at former England cricketer Michael Vaughan being used as part of the BBC's coverage of the Masters



golf, conducting post-round interviews no less, rather than them using a proper expert in the form of an ex-golfer or a trained journalist.

Adam Rant was feeling better about life having vented his frustration at such a ludicrous decision. So imagine his horror when, on the day that Rant column was printed, he flicked on the BBC's coverage of the Grand National and heard a familiar voice doing the odds round-up at Aintree.

It's fair to say he was glad he was sat down when he realised it was John Parrott. For confirmation, the man doing the expert horse racing betting analysis was John Parrott, the former snooker player. Brilliant.

Right to sign off

PEP Guardiola's decision to leave Barcelona hasn't come as a massive shock.

Nothing lasts forever and if Guardiola, pictured, looks back on his time as manager of the club during his upcoming year off he will probably reflect he made only one mistake – staying for a further season rather than bowing out at the very top.



Saints Spotlight

QUOTES of the week

"It was an incredible game with all the events that happened. I am very happy and pleased for all the players because they deserved this moment. We've had a difficult season and we seem to always get something special out when we need to. I think that's part of the DNA of these players" - Roberto Di Matteo revels in Chelsea's Champions League success against Barcelona.

"I've seen the replay and it does look bad. I'm not that type of player to intentionally hurt anyone. I've raised my knee, which I maybe shouldn't have done in hindsight. I'm disappointed but delighted for the lads. I've apologised to them and I want to apologise to the fans as well" - Captain John Terry, pictured, holds his hands up after his first-half red card left Chelsea up against it in the match.

"Since I've had a bit more local media coverage a few people have started to recognise me. One of my regular training runs goes past where a few tramps sit drinking Special Brew and I get a little shout of 'Go Louise' from them. It is Winchester though, so they are quite posh tramps!" - Great Britain's Louise Dammen attracts an unusual fanbase during her London Marathon training.

"You have thrown away the successful career in which you were involved" - Judge Mervyn Hughes QC, in sentencing Sheffield United and Wales striker Ched Evans, pictured, to five years in jail for rape.

"We got put in the situation where we took the cuts to give them the opportunity to get things sorted. We feel like we have done that and now it's up to them to do their part. We can only sit back and wait. The sooner the better" - Steven Whitaker, one of the first Rangers players to take a 75 per cent pay cut in a bid to ease the club's financial woes, challenges the club's administrators to resolve the issue.

"I like the pastilles, she sent me pastilles. It was very kind" - Manchester City manager Roberto Mancini thanks an eight-year-old girl who recently sent him fruit pastilles in the post after spotting his penchant for eating them during games.

HOW 2011/12

Saints' rollercoaster ride through the 2011/12 season has, fortunately, had many more highs than lows.
Here the SPORTS PINK takes a look at how our sister paper the DAILY ECHO reported on each of Saints' 45 league games prior to this weekend's make-or-break promotion clash with Coventry at St Mary's...

WE CAN GRIND IT OUT!!!
 There's more to Saints than 'scintillating' football

SAINTS 1 MILLWALL 0: Nigel Adkins praises his side's steel after a hard-fought win over Millwall.

REACH FOR THE STARS
 ... and, so says Saints boss Nigel Adkins, you could get the moon!

BURNLEY 1 SAINTS 1: Boss Nigel Adkins says there's no reason Saints couldn't get back-to-back promotions.

Saints' LEEDS BIG MATCH SPECIAL COVERAGE
 - see pages 35-41

Cork No 1: Jack stars as Saints open season with stunning victory

CORKING WEEKEND!

Cork No 2: Birthday boy Dom leads Hampshire to t20 finals day

SAINTS 3 LEEDS 1: Saints open with a win over Leeds, while Hampshire book their t20 finals day spot.

CORK PUTS SAFETY FIRST
 TRANSFER BATTLE

Adkins in race to strengthen after Saints leak three at Leicester

LEICESTER 3 SAINTS 2: Saints first defeat of the season prompts Adkins to look for defensive reinforcements.

SHARPEN UP!
 Adkins rues missed chances at Cardiff

CARDIFF 2 SAINTS 1: Saints return pointless from Wales, but had plenty of chances to win the game.

Saints CONNOLLY: WHY I'M HAPPY TO BE UNDER PRESSURE
 - see page 38

TYKE THAT!

Adkins praise as Saints claim another record

BARNESLEY 0 SAINTS 1: Saints clock up their fourth away win on the trot with victory over Barnsley.

RICKIE'S FORTRESS
 Hat-trick sets up new club record

SAINTS 3 NOTTINGHAM FOREST 2: Rickie Lambert scores his first hat-trick of the campaign.

WAT A SCORCHER!
 Guess which of these men got treatment from our online doctor?

SAINTS 4 WATFORD 0: Adkins' men get back on track with a comfortable win over a poor Watford side.

Saints WIN TICKETS TO MOTOCROSS GP AT MATTERLEY BASIN
 - see page 40

THE REAL DEAL

Lambert and Saints show their Championship class

IPSWICH 2 SAINTS 5: Saints show they mean business with a dismantling of highly-fancied Ipswich.

RICH PICKINGS!
 Chaplow seals another great day for Saints

SAINTS 4 BIRMINGHAM 1: Richard Chaplow is on target as Saints blow newly relegated Birmingham apart.

BEST FOOT FORWARD

Lallana set to be fit for Hammers crunch

DERBY 1 SAINTS 1: Saints warm up for a top-of-the-table clash with West Ham with a draw at Derby County.

TURN TO PAGE 48 FOR ALL TODAY'S RESULTS

Saints Spotlight

UNFOLDED...



QUOTES of the week

"We were slow and lethargic, a bit laborious, laboured and milky - most of the words I used to use when we were really struggling" - Ipswich manager Paul Jewell goes all Ready Steady Cook after his side's defeat to Millwall.

"On the morning of the game I prayed with my father and asked God to protect me - and he didn't let me down" - Bolton midfielder



Fabrice Muamba, pictured, has no doubts God was on his side following his incredible recovery from suffering a cardiac arrest during a match against Tottenham last month.

"It's ridiculous, utter chaos" - Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson fears a disrupted build-up to the 2012-13 campaign with a number of his players - including Wayne Rooney - on the short list for inclusion in the Great Britain Olympic football squad.

"He was like our Pele or Maradona but they got what they wanted out of him and hung him out to dry" - Jimmy White criticises snooker chiefs for their treatment of the late Alex Higgins.

"This idea that I left them in the lurch has gone beyond all sorts of comprehension. I found them in the lurch, I'm not so sure I left them in the lurch" - Martin O'Neill defends his reign at Aston Villa after being booed on his return to Villa Park with Sunderland.

"I thought the big turning point in the match was at 5-4 when he was in the balls and Paul Collier, the referee, missed a blatant push. It was quite obvious to me and anyone who was watching at home would have been able to see it. It seems to be a bit of a trait for the Chinese players because there've been instances in the past" - Mark Allen, pictured blasts his Chinese opponent Cao Yupeng's conduct during his World Championship first-round upset and extends his criticism to all Chinese players.

"Only one team can win this title. It's not in our hands. We have three points less" - Roberto Mancini overlooks the fact that victory in their last three games of the season will deliver the title for Manchester City.

Sport

SAINTS FANS SLAM SOUTH COAST DERBY SECURITY MEASURES

See page 5

HOO DONE IT!

JOS THE HERO AS SAINTS GO FIVE CLEAR AT THE TOP

SAINTS 1 WEST HAM 0: Jos Hooiveld's goal is enough for Saints to see off title rivals West Ham.

Sport

LAST ROUND AGONY FOR TONY FALL - see page 31

LOVING LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

'Amazing' pace suits De Ridder

READING 1 SAINTS 1: Steve De Ridder's strike earns Saints a deserved draw at Reading.

Sport

Stags party on - and it's Park Avenue next! - see pages 34/35

VERY HAPPY CHAPPY

Adkins delighted with Saints' gain for crucial role in latest success

SAINTS 3 MIDDLESBROUGH 0: Boss Nigel Adkins is delighted with his side after trouncing Boro.

Sport

BROWN A HERO AS FA CUP HEROES TOTTENHAM WIN AGAIN

Non league - page 46

HOME RULE JUST GOES ON AND ON

SAINTS 2 PETERBOROUGH 1: Victory over Peterborough extends Saints' winning home run to 19 games.

Sport

ADKINS: WHY I TINKERED WITH A WINNING SIDE

See page 38

GUY HEADING FOR THE TOP!

COVENTRY 2 SAINTS 4: Guly Do Prado's header turns a difficult game in Saints' favour at Coventry.

Sport

Charley bits out Seagull's 'picnic following "gesture"' - see page 39

BRIGHTON ROCKER

Lambert's leap of joy as Saints go marching on ...

SAINTS 3 BRIGHTON 0: Saints get revenge after Brighton pipped them to the League 1 title the previous season.

Sport

Cup fever on - and it's AFC Totton - page 3

DON'T PANIC!

Davis: We won't let negative vibes in ...

BRISTOL CITY 2 SAINTS 0: Saints slip up at lowly City, but keeper Kelvin Davis says there's no need to panic.

Sport

MASSIVE POLICE OPERATION AHEAD OF SOUTH COAST DERBY

See pages 18/19

SITTING PRETTY

Saints give themselves some breathing space

SAINTS 2 HULL 1: Nigel Adkins' men get back on course with a routine home win.

Sport

Tottenham fans out in force for Cup tie

Dates 5 & 34/37

RICKIE ABSENCE NOT TO BLAME

Adkins not using injury as excuse

Rickie Lambert shatters his nightmare but boss Adkins stands by his man after Davis milestone KO'd by injury

DONCASTER 1 SAINTS 0: A Saints side minus the injured Rickie Lambert falls to defeat at Doncaster.

Sport

ADKINS TAKES ST MARY'S SETBACK IN HIS STRIDE

See page 39

JEEPERS KEEPERS

Bart has a nightmare but boss Adkins stands by his man after Davis milestone KO'd by injury

SAINTS 2 BLACKPOOL 2: An error by keeper Bartosz Bialkowski hands Blackpool a share of the points.

Sport

Policeman for Saint's visit is a big success

See pages 8/9

RICKIE 'GUTTED' AFTER ONE OF THE GREATEST FEELINGS OF HIS LIFE ENDS WITH DERBY STALEMATE ...

Rickie 'gutted' after one of the greatest feelings of his life ends with derby stalemate ...

MIXED EMOTIONS

POMPEY 1 SAINTS 1: The first Hampshire derby of the season ends all square at Fratton Park.

Sport

Adkins issues 'hands off' warning after Kickin' Town link ...

See page 38

REDEMPTION DAY

Guly heads back into the good books with double!

SAINTS 2 CRYSTAL PALACE 0: Guly Do Prado's double gets Saints a first win in five games.

SEE MONDAY'S ECHO FOR MORE SAINTS NEWS AND VIEWS

Saints Spotlight

Sports Quiz

1 Bolton winger Martin Petrov played for which German club between 2001 and 2005?

2 Timo Glock and Charles Pic are the drivers for which Formula One team?

3 Who is the captain of Hampshire's cricket team?

4 Where do Super League club Hull KR play their home matches?

5 Jade Jones is an Olympic hopeful in which sport?

6 From which club did Chelsea sign Ramires in 2010?

7 Which stadium will host the 2015 Rugby World Cup final?

8 Kumar Sangakkara is the captain of which Indian Premier League team?

9 Who is the highest-placed American in the men's world golf rankings?

10 The NHL team nicknamed the Jets play home games in which city?

11 Who was the last British winner of the Masters golf tournament, and when?

12 Which city's Major League Baseball team are nicknamed the Astros?

13 Who did the Football Writers' Association vote as their Player of the Year for the 2010-11 season?

14 Name the coach of Australia's national rugby union team.

15 Which Australian city has an A-League football team nicknamed Glory?

16 Holland striker Klaas Jan Huntelaar plays for which club side?

17 Who won the 2011 Tour de France?

18 Prior to this weekend in Bahrain, when was the last time two Lotus drivers finished on the podium in a Formula One Grand Prix - 1979, 1989 or 1999?

19 Who are the only two players in the top 10 of the golf world rankings not from either England or the USA?

20 Which county did Nick Compton play for before joining Somerset?

21. In which country did Pep Guardiola end his playing career?

22. Where will this season's Heineken Cup final take place?

23. Boxer Terry Spinks won gold at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics in which weight division?

24. Sophie Hitchon is the British record holder in which athletics discipline?

25. Oliver Wilkes plays for which Super League side?

Hammel; 25. Wackerleid.

Twickenham; 23. Flyweight; 24.

Mexico (with Dorados); 22.

Kaymer (Notre Dame); 20 Middlesex;

McIlroy (Nottingham); 19 PwC

17 Cael Evans; 18 1979; 19 PwC

Robbie Deans; 15 Peth; 16 Schalk;

Burke; 14 Davis; 13 Scott Parker;

12 Houston; 9 Bubba Watson (fourth);

10 Wimborne; 11 Nick Faldo (1996);

9 Darren Clarke; 7 Twickenham; 8 Deccan

Baillie; 5 Wimbeldon; 6

Cossmore; 3 Jimmy Adams; 4

Craven Park; 2 Marussia;

Answers: 1 Welford; 2 Marussia-

HOW 2011/12



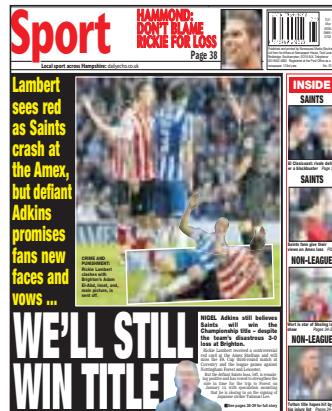
SAINTS 0 BRISTOL CITY 1: Saints' hopes of ending 2011 unbeaten at home are ended by shock defeat.



SAINTS 1 CARDIFF 1: Saints mid-season blip continues with a home draw with Cardiff.



SAINTS 4 DERBY 0: Saints show they're back on top form with a 4-0 crushing of Derby.



BRIGHTON 3 SAINTS 0: Boss Adkins maintains Saints will still win the league, despite loss at the Amex.



BIRMINGHAM 0 SAINTS 0: Neither side can get to grips with the snowy conditions in this Midlands stalemate.



WATFORD 0 SAINTS 3: Lambert hits another hat-trick as Saints close in on promotion dream.



NOTTINGHAM FOREST 0 SAINTS 3: Saints win at Forest overshadowed by rumours of Adkins' transfer targets.



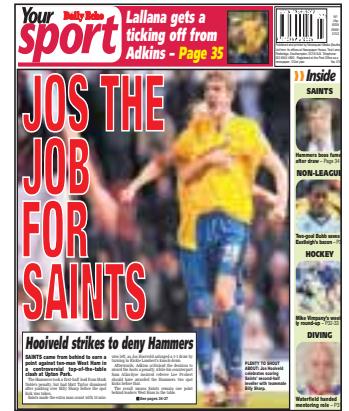
SAINTS 2 BURNLEY 0: A win over Eddie Howe's Burnley sets Saints up for their rematch with West Ham.



LEEDS 0 SAINTS 1: Kelvin Davis is at his inspirational best to earn Saints another precious away win.



SAINTS 0 LEICESTER 2: Ex-Saints Matt Mills and ex-Pompey ace David Nugent stun Saints at St Mary's.



WEST HAM 1 SAINTS 1: Hooiveld is on target against the Hammers again as Saints draw at Upton Park.



SAINTS 1 IPSWICH 1: A late strike denied Saints a win and opened the door to their promotion rivals.

Saints Spotlight

UNFOLDED...



BOOK of the WEEK

Your sport Ex-Saint Jamie a step closer to goal record - Page 30

HOME SWEAT HOME
... the heat is on, and Nigel's Saints show they can cope ...

RICKIE LAMBERT

PEN-OMENAL!

SAINTS 2 BARNSLEY 0: Saints rise to the mounting pressure with a clinical 2-0 win.

Your sport Fernandes looks ahead to dream contest - Page 20/31

Spot on Rickie reaches milestone

CHARGE FOR THE PREMIER LEAGUE

MILLWALL 2 SAINTS 3: Rickie Lambert becomes the first Saints player to net four hat-tricks in one season.

Your sport Adkins staying calm after away joy - Page 39

CHARGE OF THE PREMIER LEAGUE

HULL OF A NIGHT!
Saints win away (again!) Hammers held (again!) Reading lose at Posh ...

HULL 0 SAINTS 2: Win at Hull sees promotion race swing in Saints favour once again.

Your sport SAINTS: Lambert injury latest - Page 35

WORK TO RULE

Two-goal Sharp: We're top because we work harder than ANYONE in the league

SAINTS 2 DONCASTER 0: Saints striker Billy Sharp hits a double against his former club.

Your sport How: My strikers are the best in the Championship - Pg 32

Don't panic ... we're still in a great position!

RICKIE'S RELIEF

Op rumours untrue - he should face Pompey

BLACKPOOL 3 SAINTS 0: Lambert-less Saints fall at Blackpool, but striker declares himself fit for the run-in.

Your sport Why my Saints will be the death of me! - Page 32

AWAY THE LADS!

Saints aim to party like they did in 1999

Derby emotions run high

SAINTS 2 POMPEY 2: A late Pompey leveller means honours are even once again in the south coast derby.

Your sport Rickie: I want to score 30 league goals - Pages 34/35

ALMOST THERE!

Saints closing in on the top flight

CRYSTAL PALACE 0 SAINTS 2: Win puts Saints on the brink of top flight return.

Your sport Gr-eight-est day of Balcombe's career - Page 49

SICKENER!

Sub Le Fondre stuns Saints as Royals take over top spot

SAINTS 1 READING 3: Home defeat hands Reading the initiative in the title race.

Your sport Almost time to get the party started - pg 40/41

UN-BILL-EVABLE!

BILLY Sharp scores twice as Adkins' super Saints take giant step towards Premier League ...

PETERBOROUGH 1 SAINTS 3: Billy Sharp is at the double again as the promotion race takes another twist.

Your sport Ervine stars in dramatic last-day Hants win - pg 36

DESTINY IS STILL IN OUR HANDS

OUR destiny is in our hands

MIDDLESBROUGH 2 SAINTS 1: Defeat at Boro means Saints' promotion party has to go on hold.

AND DID THEY DO IT...

See Monday's Echo for reports and reaction from Saints' crucial final game with Coventry

MUD SWEAT & GEARS

By Ellie Bennett

Sportsbookofthemonth.com price: £6.56, saving 39% on rrp

PUBS are such wonderful institutions. They thrive by being warm, sociable, welcoming places where jokes are told, grievances aired, politics discussed and where outrageous plans are hatched.

In Mud Sweat and Gears, author Ellie Bennett, careering towards her 50th birthday, asks, "How many less than sensible ideas have been cooked in the pub after one too many beers?" The answer, of course, is 'millions'.

However, unlike 99 per cent of folks who agree to participate in absurd projects when fuelled with a few beers, only to soberly withdraw the following day, Ms Bennett sees her positive, if slightly hesitant, response to an enormous challenge through.

The result is a tale of an unusual sporting quest to cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats, stopping en route at a number of fantastic-sounding pubs. In fact, the author helpfully supplies readers with an index of the 50 best pubs she

and her good friend and co-cyclist Mick visit during the journey.

This is not a story which concerns itself with the mechanics of getting fit and undertaking hours of training before setting off to break well-established records.

Far from it: in fact, within a few minutes of starting, the author's chain has fallen from her bike.

Instead, it's the type of sporting journey millions of ordinary people undertake every year, often with the intention of raising money for charity or another good cause.

Though they had not initially planned to do so, our pair of intrepid riders opt to make the journey in aid of a local Alzheimer's charity, a decision which gives the book a further sense of purpose and makes it more meaningful for the millions or people who have done something similar.

Though Bennett prefers not to provide readers with constant updates on muscle pains and strains, she really gets into the swing when in travelogue mode.

Her anecdotes and witty asides are long enough to make them interesting, frequently seasoning a story that could, in less accomplished hands, become a little repetitive.

Bennett avoids this and while purists may argue that this is not necessarily a sports book, it is a story underpinned by a mammoth sporting undertaking. Sport doesn't have to be about smashing world records and, as Bennett proves, it's the taking part that matters.

TOOLSTATION
A LOT MORE THAN TOOLS

FOR TODAY'S LIVE NON-LEAGUE NEWS TURN TO PAGE 23

Saints Spotlight



CHARGE FOR THE
PREMIER LEAGUE

WHAT fan-tastic backing thousands of Saints fans who made the long journey gave to Saints at Middlesbrough last weekend. Here are just a small selection of the supporters pictured at The Riverside. Can you spot yourself?



Saints Spotlight



HAVE YOUR SAY ON SAINTS - LOG ON TO echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Saints Spotlight

Moran: My thanks to Saints fans

Simon Walter

simon.walter@dailyecho.co.uk

STEVE Moran has thanked the Southampton fans who supported him during his Premiership Pedalathon.

The former Saints striker completed his epic 1,400-mile cycle ride when he arrived at Hull City for their home game against Nottingham Forest last weekend.

He completed his journey by cycling a lap of the KC Stadium at half-time.

Moran cycled between all 20 Premiership clubs as well as Wembley and the five clubs he played for (Saints, Leicester, Reading, Exeter, and Hull).

He did it to support Connor Lancaster, the 12-year-old son of his partner Hayley, and other sufferers of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

The 51-year-old was a guest on the pitch at St Mary's at half time during the 3-1 defeat at home to Reading two weeks ago, having cycled the 50 miles between the clubs that day.

That was one of the highlights of his three weeks in the saddle.

"We raised more than £500 just from supporters putting money in the buckets outside St Mary's that night," he said.

"And the reception I had from both sets of supporters at half time was amazing. I'm so appreciative of the support I've received from Saints fans and the club."

"The Southampton stewards couldn't do enough for me and the fans have almost been on a mission to support me."

Moran's last week was also his hardest of the three.

"Earlier in the trip I nearly fell asleep leaning against traffic lights in Wolverhampton and I had five punctures one day in London."

"But I only had four-and-a-half hours sleep one night last week and I was cycling knowing the forecast was for rain every day!"

So far Steve has raised more than £4,000 but that is still less than half of the £10,000 he targeted.

To donate go to premier-shippedalathon.co.uk.

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It's one of the

GREAT DAY: Danny Wallace, main picture, celebrates one of his three goals against Coventry in April 1984. Below – City keeper Perry Suckling is beaten for one of Saints' eight strikes.



IT was 28 years ago this weekend that Saints romped to their best ever top flight victory.

And remarkably the visitors to St Mary's this weekend, Coventry City, were the same club who were on the receiving end of a Dell battering on April 28 1984.

Both Danny Wallace and Steve Moran scored hat-tricks, with David Armstrong and Frank Worthington also scoring.

Only once in post-war football, in 66 seasons, have Saints scored more goals in a league match.

That was the club's record win in September 1965 when Martin Chivers netted four times in an 9-3 Dell win against Wolves.

Here, Tom Crocker looks back at Saints' highest scoring post-war victories.

Sept 18 1965: Division 2
Saints 9 (Chivers 4, Sydenham 2, Paine 2, O'Brien) Wolves 3
Att: 23,226

Apr 28 1984: Division 1
Saints 8 (Wallace 3, Moran 3, Worthington, Armstrong) Coventry 2
Att: 16,746

Jan 29 1964: Division 2
Saints 7 (Chivers 2, Wimshurst, Horstead, Sydenham, Kirby, Burnside) Scunthorpe 2
Att: 14,221

Cont on facing page

SPORTS PINK - ALWAYS BEST FOR SAINTS NOSTALGIA

Saints Spotlight



gr-eight-est!

ON THE ATTACK: Mick Mills goes for goal in April 1984.



FLASHBACK: Nick Holmes, below left, while Suckling is beaten again, below.



Oct 5 1957: Division 3 South
Saints 7 (Clifton 2, Reeves, Walker 2, Hoskins 2) Bournemouth 0
Att: 22,047

Dec 14 1957: Division 3 South
Saints 7 (Reeves 2, Roper 2, Paine 2, Hoskins) Norwich 3
Att: 11,430

Feb 22 1958: Division 3 South
Saints 7 (Reeves 2, Hoskins 2, Roper 2, Traynor) Coventry 1
Att: 11,195

Oct 23 1948: Division 2
Saints 6 Wayman 5, Bates) Leicester 0.

Att: 23,907

Jan 11 1958: Division 3 South
Saints 6 (Reeves 2, Mulgrew, Sydenham 2, Roper) Exeter 0
Att: 12,668

Nov 11 1962: Division 2
Saints 6 (Kirby 3, O'Brien 2, Paine) Middlesbrough 0
Att: 14,956

Dec 21 1963: Division 2
Saints 6 (Sydenham 2, Kirby, Chivers 2, McGuigan) Grimsby 0
Att: 19,242

May 4 1971: Division 1
Saints 6 (Gabriel, Harfield,

Davies, O'Neil, Channon x2)
Crystal Palace 0
Att: 15,980

Jan 22 1977: Division 2
Carlisle 0 Saints 6 (Holmes 2, Osgood, Peach, MacDougall, Channon)
Att: 9,617

March 2007: Championship
Wolves 0 Saints 6 (Saganowski 3, og, Best, Surman)
Att: 24, 804

Jan 11 2011: League One
Oldham 0 Saints 6 (Oxlade-Chamberlain, Lallana, Do Prado, Chaplow, Lambert, Barnard)
Att: 3,767

CONTACT THE SPORTS DESK ON 02380 424515

Brock not favourites

BROCKENHURST aim to lift the British Colleges Cup for the second time in three seasons at Doncaster Rovers' Keepmoat Stadium next Wednesday afternoon.

But, on paper, they'll be the underdogs when they face free scoring Greenbank College, from Merseyside, in the final.

The Liverpool side have racked up a staggering 121 goals, winning all but two of their 24 league and cup ties this season.

But it won't have escaped Brock's notice that the Greenbank defence may not be so strong as its attack.

Whilst scoring goals has not been a problem, they've been leaking them at the other end - with Greenbank twice letting in six goals in a match, four in another, and three goals on three other occasions.

Those stats will be music to the ears of guys like Brad Hill, Lewis Ross, above, and Adam Stride, who could all be match winners for Brock, whose exploits en route to the final have been modest in comparison.

Brockenhurst's cup run

Round 1: QMC 2 – 3 Brockenhurst (Adam Stride 2, own goal)

Round 2: South Downs 1 – 7 Brockenhurst (Brad Hill 3, Jack Lovell 2, Caleb Porter, Lewis Ross)

Round 3: Brockenhurst 5 – 0 BHASVIC (Brad Hill, Adam Stride, Jack Lovell, Brad Aspin and Tom Du Faur)

Round 4: Brockenhurst 2 Colliers 0 (Adam Stride 2)

Round 5: Brockenhurst 1 – 0 South Thames (Adam Stride)

Round 6: Brockenhurst 3 – 0 Gower College Swansea (Jack Lovell 2, Harry Cooper)

Semi-final: Brockenhurst 1 – 0 East Norfolk (Lewis Ross)

This is the third successive year a Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges side has reached the British final, Sparsholt finishing runners-up last season.

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Winners

Competition number S16

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Mr F Mercer, Nr Tiverton, Devon.
who wins the Runner Up prize of £1,450

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Mr M Balston, Gosport, Hants
Mrs S Blake, Southampton, Hants
Mr A Bushnell, Southampton, Hants
Mrs B Edwards, Salisbury, Wiltshire
Mr D Goulding, Southampton, Hants
Mrs M Hooker, Southampton, Hants
Mr G Jessup, Southampton, Hants
Mrs M Jessup, Southampton, Hants
Mr C Lock, Lymington, Hants

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1. You are allowed a minimum of 60 crosses and a maximum of 325 per coupon. Coupons with 326 or more will be disqualified. Entries altered defaced or mutilated will be invalid. Crosses must be distinct and separate. 2. Competitors may submit as many coupons as they wish. Members of a family can send their entries in one envelope with a covering postal order or cheque. 3. No responsibility can be accepted for entries delayed, lost or mislaid. Proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. 4. Payment may be made by postal order or cheque for the correct amount payable to Newsquest, and crossed ' & Co.' Stamps will not be accepted in payment. 5. A competitor cannot win more than one share of the prize money across all titles each week. 6. The Editor's decision on winning entry or entries and matters relating to this competition is binding in honour only. NO CORRESPONDENCE CAN BE ENTERED INTO. 7. Employees of NEWSQUEST Media Group and subsidiary companies and members of their families are not eligible to enter the competition. 8. Address entries to FTB PO Box 24 Competitions, Southampton SO16 9ZD in a sealed envelope. Understamped entries are not accepted. 9. Prize monies are held for and on behalf of winners. 10. Do not send cash in the post. 11. Winners will be required to participate in publicity. 12. Photocopies not accepted.



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You have to use your skill and judgement to determine the exact centre of the ball.

Mark an X with a ballpoint pen on the picture where you consider that position to be – clear rubber stamps and self adhesive labels will also be accepted.

Every coupon will be carefully examined and the jackpot prize will be paid to the entrant whose cross marks the exact centre of the ball when the photograph was taken.

If the Jackpot is not won, £1,000 will be added to next week's jackpot and £50 will be added to the nearest-miss prize.

The nearest-miss prize will be paid out to the competitor whose cross is nearest to the centre of the ball when there is no jackpot winner.

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If the Jackpot is not won after 45 weeks, when standing at £50,000, three nearest miss prizes will be awarded totalling £24,000 – with a first prize of £12,000, a second prize of £8,000 and a third prize of £4,000.

The jackpot for the following week will be £26,000 with £1,000 being added each week. The nearest miss prize will be £2,000 with £50 added each week until the jackpot prize reaches £50,000.

If there is still no entry showing the exact centre of the ball, the process is repeated until there is an exact centre of the ball winner.

If there is more than one winner the jackpot will be shared and, similarly, if there is more than one runner-up the nearest miss prize will also be shared.



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Non-league Action

Diaper's men travel to Gosport in play-off

SHOLING SET

'BORO TEST...

Wendy Gee

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

SHOLING will travel to Gosport Borough on Monday in the Evo-Stik Southern One South & West play-offs after hanging onto fourth spot with a 1-1 draw at Yate Town.

Having taken a 16th-minute lead with an excellent Lewis Fennemore strike, the Boatmen were pegged back from the penalty spot after the break and were lucky not have centre-back Lee Bright sent off for pulling down his opponent as last man.

Sholing still ended up with ten men, however, when Marc Diaper was controversially sent off for violent conduct – a decision the club are considering appealing against.

Third-placed Gosport Borough rounded off their season by edging Bishops Cleeve 2-1 at Privett Park – Justin Bennett and Adam Wilde (penalty) on target.

SECOND

Poole Town made sure of second spot with a 3-1 home win over champions Bideford courtesy of Dan Cann, Carl Preston and an own goal.

Tom Killick's men will entertain fifth-placed Hungerford in the play-offs on Tuesday – the Berkshire side having been thumped 6-3 at home by North Leigh.

AFC Totton must wait until Tuesday to find out their Evo-Stik Premier Division play-off fate.

But after this afternoon's final league game at home to Bedford Town was rained off, the Stags now know they need just one point to make certain of a top-five place.

Although today's postponement has pushed them out of the play-off zone with 71 points, they boast a significantly better goal difference than fifth-placed Stourbridge, who have 72 after being held 1-1 at Frome. And,



Daily Echo pic by Paul Collins.

with third-placed Chesham losing, a win in Tuesday's rearranged Bedford game could even lift Totton to third, securing home advantage in Thursday's play-off semi-final.

Havant & Waterlooville – widely tipped as the next port of call for departing Totton boss Stuart Ritchie – hung on to their Conference South status by winning a 3-2 thriller against Staines at Westleigh Park.

The Hawks went in 2-2 at half-time through Scott Jones and Ollie Palmer, having missed a Christian Nanetti penalty, and

looked to be on their way down with relegation rivals Maidenhead edging Eastleigh 4-3.

But Joe Dolan's dramatic stoppage-time winner against his old club was enough to keep them up.

New Milton Town face an anxious wait to see if they will remain a Sydenhams Premier club. The Linnets battled out a 3-3 thriller at fellow basement boys Hayling United to climb out of the bottom two.

But Glenn Burnett's men must sweat on the outcome of next week's rearranged match

between second-to-bottom Brading and Hamworthy United which was postponed.

● ANDOVER New Street were forced to concede their final match of the Sydenhams Wessex League Division One today after manager Brian Drury resigned – taking the bulk of his squad with him.

Next season they will look towards a more locally-based squad managed by ex-Bashley and Andover FC striker Phil Andrews and Trevor Knight, assisted by Stuart Anderson.



Spitfires are grounded by Maidenhead late show

Maidenhead 4 Eastleigh 3

EASTLEIGH were beaten 4-3 by Maidenhead in a most dramatic end of season encounter.

Fielding an unchanged starting line-up against opponents needing a win to have a chance of avoiding relegation, Eastleigh fell behind on 15 minutes when Tom Jordan fell over in the slippery conditions and Maidenhead took full advantage with Tison-Lascaris setting up Alex Wall to score.

Five minutes later a free kick was only cleared into the path of Tison-Lascaris, who made it 2-0.

However, Eastleigh did pull a goal back in the 39th minute when Bradley Bubb set up Lee Peacock to score. And before half-time Andy Forbes came close to levelling.

Maidenhead had a great chance to take a 3-1 lead when Tison-Lascaris rounded Eastleigh substitute goalkeeper Gareth Barfoot and seemed set to score but hit the post.

Eastleigh then made them pay for the mistake with first substitute Sam Wilson slotting home his first league goal for Eastleigh and then Daryl McMahon's cross being headed home by Mithcell Nelson.

Tison-Lascaris soon levelled and then, as the home team threw the kitchen sink at Eastleigh, Semakula netted the 92nd minute winner. However, a last minute winner from Havant meant Maidenhead were relegated despite the victory.

Whites get one over on former boss Widdrington

Eastbourne 1 Salisbury 3

THE Whites rounded off their season with a great 3-1 victory at ex-Salisbury boss Tommy Widdrington's Eastbourne.

With neither side having anything to play for, the game could easily have been "a nothing" affair, but the management connections between the sides and Salisbury midfielder Stuart Anderson playing on loan for the home side gave the clash a necessary boost.

In the first-half Salisbury had to battle against a very strong wind and just after the half hour Will Puddy pulled off a great save from Ellis Remy to keep the hosts at bay.

Towards the end of the half Salisbury came good with Dan Fitchett going close and Marvin Williams terrorising the home defence with his pace, but it was goalless at the break.

After the interval and with the wind now at their backs, Salisbury showed intent with Charlie Griffin bringing a point blank save from Clarke Masters before Stuart Sinclair somehow put a shot over the top from two yards out.

On 62 minutes Griffin fired in a vicious 25-yarder that Masters could only parry to Williams who tucked the chance away.

Four minutes later the Whites doubled their lead with a superb Griffin strike from the edge of the box and 12 minutes from the end Fitchett made it three after great combination with Williams.

A consolation goal from Gary Hart arrived on 88 minutes but Widdrington was not consoled.

Non-league Football

Borough progress gets Pike purring

ALEX Pike has always been confident that he possesses the best striker in the Evo-Stik Southern One South & West.

But even with big gun Justin Bennett in their armoury, Borough have never quite had what it takes to push for the play-offs and promotion.

Until now, that is.

With a top-three finish already in the bag prior to today's visit of Bishops Cleeve, Borough are preparing to open their Privett Park doors to either Sholing or Hungerford Town on Monday (7.45pm) in the play-off semi-finals.

Without doubt this is Gosport's finest season since they won promotion as Wessex League champions in 2006/07. And, according to Pike, pictured below, it's their defensive additions and the arrival of seasoned ex-pro Steve Claridge that have made the difference.

"We've always had the best striker in the league in Justin Bennett – and it's not just me that thinks that," he said.

"But all of a sudden we've signed two quality defenders in Lee Molyneaux and Brett Poate and goalkeeper Nathan Ashmore who's

among the best in the league.

"We already had good players here like Aaron Cook, Gavin Jones and Nathan Kirby and then we signed Steve Claridge who's brought a degree of professionalism to the club.

"We've only lost four times in the league all season. Only the champions Bideford can beat that."

Not only are Borough coming of age on the park, but they are strengthening off it.

"It shouldn't be overlooked that we've spent £275,000 on the ground which now has Conference South grading," said Pike.

"We've got new floodlights, a new stand ... it's all happening here."

"With the demise of Portsmouth, we've also picked up three or four new sponsors – and we're not just talking small amounts. They want to put in £10,000-plus each and that will make a huge difference to Gosport next year."

Whatever happens in the play-offs, Pike has thoroughly enjoyed the season.

"It's because of the level we're playing at," he said. "Some say this division is just a glorified Wessex League, but it's actually a very good league. Every week you're tried and tested."

"It's good to see Winchester City get top spot in the Wessex League and, hopefully, they'll get promoted, but they won't find it easy at this level," he warned.

"Tom Killick won the Wessex League three times with Poole, but after the first six games in this league they'd lost four, and Tom realised he had to go out and sign other players."



PAUL WALLACE

'Total nonsense' to accuse Totton

AFC TOTTON'S acting chairman Paul Wallace insists the executive committee have always been fully behind the Stags' push for promotion to the Blue Square Bet South.

In a week when manager Stuart Ritchie tendered his resignation, Wallace dismissed as "total nonsense" talk that the Totton hierarchy would prefer not to get promoted for fear that the Stags are moving forward too quickly having only just come up from the Southern One South & West.

Totton were today fighting to make the Southern Premier Division play-offs at the first time of asking and, if

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

successful, will be banging on the door of a second promotion in as many years.

There has been speculation that one of Ritchie's reasons for leaving after eight success-filled seasons is that the club are struggling to match off the field what they are achieving on it.

But Wallace strongly rejects any suggestion that Totton are either unwilling or unprepared to progress to the next tier of the non-League pyramid.

"From a club point of view, that is

total nonsense," he said. "The executive committee, the trustees and, hopefully, all the supporters are fully committed to improving and going up to a higher level."

"This season has probably exceeded all expectations, but if someone had said at the start that we would be challenging for the play-offs, we would have snapped their hands off."

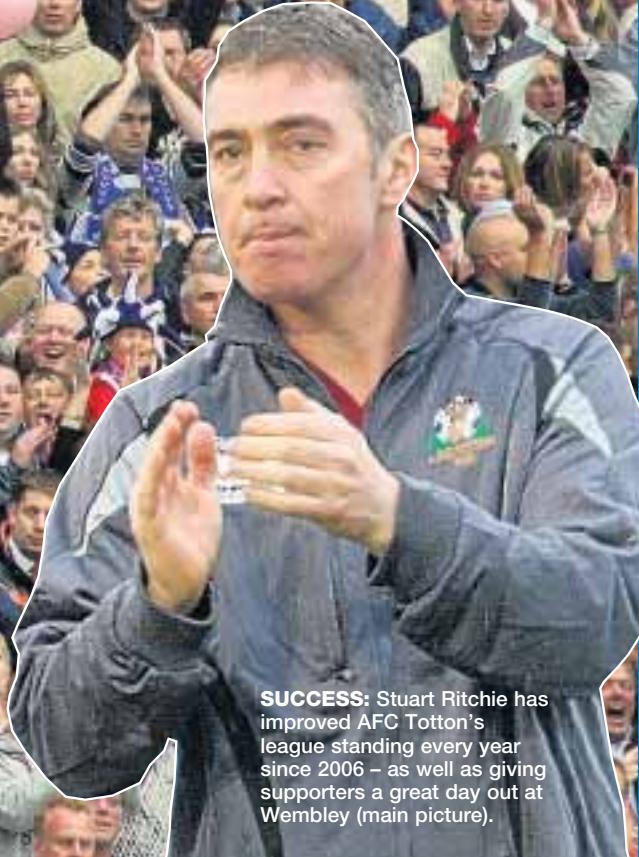
When Jim Fallon, the Stags' former main sponsor, withdrew his funding in early March, he questioned the executive committee's ability to raise funds and drive the club forward.

But Wallace, who stepped into the breach when Sean Whelan ended a brief reign as chairman at the start of April, stated: "We will cut our

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL STORY TO TELL? CALL WENDY GEE

Non-league Football

GET PROMOTED



A team of lacking ambition – Wallace

cloth accordingly if we go up – and, yes, we can afford to be in the Blue Square Bet South.

"The costs are slightly greater at the Testwood Stadium than they were at the old ground, but things have settled down now with the water, gas and electric bills.

"At first we were landed with a large lump sum for each while (ground developers) Linden Homes were sorting out the connections, but now we are getting regular bills and can anticipate our outgoings and budget for them accordingly.

"The team manager next season will have the playing budget we can afford, whichever league we are in. We have done one, three and five-year projections for this division and

also for the Conference South."

That manager will not be Ritchie, who has opted to step down after eight magical years at the helm.

Since leading the Stags to Wessex League Cup glory in 2006, the former Aston Villa and Crewe Alexandra midfielder has raised the bar each and every season.

Totton graced the new Wembley in the 2007 FA Vase final and have since won the Wessex League and Southern One South & West titles and back-to-back Hampshire FA Senior Cups.

Earlier this season they made national headlines, reaching the FA Cup second round proper for the first time in their history and hosting a live TV game against Bristol Rovers.

A club statement said: "It is with massive regret that we have to advise that Stuart Ritchie has submitted notice to leave the club at the end of the current Southern League season.

"After eight years at the helm Stuart feels that the time has come for him to move on and face a new challenge."

Acting chairman Wallace added: "I hope everyone will remember all the years Stuart has put into the club. He's been a great servant to AFC Totton."

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Cotes a good fit for Bemerton

BEMERTON Heath Harlequins experienced a reversal in cup fortunes this week.

Last year Ian Chalk's men lifted the Wiltshire Senior Cup and suffered disappointment in the Russell Cotes Cup final at Newport Iow.

But one piece of silverware has made way for the other in the Western Way trophy cabinet, with the Russell Cotes now taking pride of place.

Having failed to retain their county crown in a heated contest against Calne Town at Chippenham last weekend, the Harlequins tackled their second final in four days at Christchurch on Tuesday night.

And this time they came away 2-0 victors as a Jack Slade brace and a man-of-the-match performance from goalkeeper Freddie Toomer contributed to Priory's RCC downfall.

Heath skipper Slade netted an early header and then wrapped up victory by burying

Bemerton relinquished the Wiltshire Senior Cup with a controversial 2-1 defeat to Toolstation Western League outfit Calne.

Chalk was fuming after just 20 seconds when Calne forward Tyler Sibbick slipped on the wet surface but won a penalty for a supposed Graham Mankin challenge as the defender saw the ball out for a corner.

Sibbick converted from the spot and 20 minutes later set up Levi Cox for Calne's second.

Danny Young pulled one back on 39 minutes, but poor finishing and an inspired performance by Calne goalkeeper Steve Allison kept Heath out.

Trouble erupted after the game when Allison refused to shake hands and allegedly punched Bemerton forward Joe Sanger when he asked why.

The Calne keeper was then sent off allegedly flooring Heath's Joe Fisher who was himself shown red during the trophy



ALL SMILES: Bemerton Heath Harlequins celebrate winning the Russell Cotes Cup.

the loose ball amid a goalmouth scramble in the second half.

Christchurch had no luck at all, hitting the bar and post and being thwarted by a stubborn performance from former Eastleigh and Romsey stopper Toomer.

Two years ago Bemerton were winners of the Sydenhams Wessex League Cup at Priory's Hurn Bridge home and secretary Andy Hardwick admitted: "It's a lucky ground for us, but I felt 2-0 flattened us."

"Christchurch should have been 3-1 up, but we weathered the storm and Fred Toomer was outstanding. Mind you, their keeper made some good saves too."

presentation.

"The penalty decision set the tone for the rest of the day," said Chalk.

"The final showpiece was an absolute joke.

"We may not be angels, but referees have a responsibility as well and the FA need to take a real look at who they appoint to certain games and whether they can actually handle the occasion."

Heath are still involved in the Salisbury Hospital Cup and entertain Downton in the semi-final on Monday for the chance to take on Amesbury or Laverstock & Ford.

The final is at Salisbury City's Raymond McEnhill Stadium next Wednesday (May 2).

Kemp: finishing was the difference

CHRISTCHURCH boss Graham Kemp felt poor finishing cost his side in Tuesday's Russell Cotes Cup final.

Jack Slade's double ensured Bemerton Heath Harlequins left Hurn Bridge with the silverware – despite Priory creating a host of openings in a 2-0 defeat.

Sam Griffin and Russell Cook each hit the woodwork at 1-0, while Bemerton keeper Fred Toomer earned the man-of-the-match award with fine saves from James Burden and Cook.

But it was Bemerton who proved more clinical in front of goal, leaving a crestfallen Kemp to wonder what might have been.

"The finishing was the difference and it was disappointing to concede two goals to set-

pieces. It's all about putting the ball in the back of the net – they did and we didn't." he said.

"If I'm honest, we should have been two or three up at half-time. I think they got away with it and there wasn't one moment at half-time where I didn't feel we would go on to win the game."

"Bemerton are a good side, though, and they came out and stifled us a bit. We didn't really create a lot after the break and, once they got the second, the game was over."

Kemp will hope that his side will come back strongly in the Sydenhams Wessex League Cup final against Brockenhurst at, of all places, Bemerton on Monday week (May 7).

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Gamble pays off
FORMER Winchester City striker Mark Gamble was on target as New Forest outfit Bashley made sure of Evo-Stik Premier Division survival with a 2-2 draw at Bedford Town last Saturday.

Bash, requiring a point to guarantee safety, went 2-0 up through Gamble, pictured, and James Stokoe



before ex-Christchurch goalkeeper Stewart Kearns saved a penalty from Ollie Thorne. James Hatch and Graham Clark hit back to earn Bedford a share of the spoils.

On march in March!
CHRISTCHURCH have won the Sydenhams Premier Division club of the month award for the fourth time this season.

It follows a near perfect March in which Graham Kemp's (pictured) men won six out of seven league fixtures and beat Downton to reach the final of the SWL Cup.

Runners-up AFC Portchester won the Division One award for March.

Hands off, Hayling
FAREHAM Town have rejected Hayling United's seven-day notice of approach for pacy centre-half Ashley Donald. The former AFC Portchester, Horndean, New Milton and Chichester City player, who has featured for Fareham's reserves this season, has opted to stay with the Creeksiders.

Macey's aces
WHITCHURCH United beat Stockbridge 3-1 in the Andover Open Cup final thanks to goals from Luke Walker, Paul Coventry and Ali Brown.

"It was a well deserved victory and we played really well in the second half," said Jim Macey, manager of the Sydenhams Division One side. "It's nice to win a trophy and we seem to have done well in cup competitions this year."

Cuss wants Magpies to stick together

THREE of Wimborne Town's inform squad have been secured on contracts for next season.

Top scorer Matt Kemble, winger Jamie Davidson and defender Jordan Cole have all agreed new deals to keep them at Cuthbury for another year, with manager Steve Cuss promising more to follow.

Cuss, pictured right, whose team have put their Evo-Stik Southern One South & West relegation worries firmly behind them by winning five of their last eight league matches, said: "It is an important summer for me to try to keep the squad together.

"We are limited with our budget but, where we can, we try to put players on contracts if that is what the player wants.

"I have, or will be, speaking to all the players to try to get them to commit to us next year."

"A lot of these players have joined us mid-season and I hope they see the progression we have made and want to stay at the club.

"We haven't really set any targets, we just try to win every game."

"At the moment things are going well for us and, hopefully, we can keep the squad together and carry our good form into next season."

Cuss's comments came after Wimborne had won an entertaining home clash 2-1 against Tiverton Town last Saturday.

Goals by George Webb and Tom Jeffes set the Magpies on their way and, although Tivvy's Jules Emati scored with ten minutes

remaining to set up a grandstand finish, Jon Blake's goal-line clearance denied Michael Nardiello a stoppage-time leveller.

"Our defending has improved 100 per cent," said Cuss. "We are making good decisions on the ball and defending properly and that is keeping us in games."

Wimborne's never-say-die spirit was typified by midfielder Blake, who has impressed since arriving from Bournemouth Poppies in March.

"I am really pleased for Jon," said Cuss. "He has come in and given it a go with us at the higher level.

"He is a major player in both boxes for us and his workrate and determination in midfield was excellent."



CASE LANDS CHERRIES JOB AFTER FAWCETT'S FIELD WORK EXPERIENCE



PROFESSIONAL CONTRACT: Ryan Case, right.

NEW Milton Town loanee Ryan Case has joined teammates Alex Moth and Harrison Gilkes in signing a professional contract with League One outfit AFC Bournemouth.

The trio, who have all been on work experience at Fawcett's Field, are among just four players in their age-group to be offered a pro deal at Dean Court, writes WENDY GEE.

Case, an 18-year-old former Brighton Hill Community College pupil from Basingstoke, said: "It was overwhelming and the news took a while to settle in."

"Saying 'Ryan Case, professional footballer' did not sound right at first, but now I have embraced it and am really happy."

It has been a dramatic few years for Case, who was a comparative late starter at Bournemouth.

While many of the boys he has been playing alongside at the Cherries academy have been with the club from a young age, defender Case was 15 when he was spotted playing in the local leagues.

"It took ages for me to get a chance, but I took it with both hands and got the scholarship," he said. "I have had to work really hard over the last two years to earn a professional contract and it is great."

"Now I am just planning to take each day as it comes, train really hard and see what happens."

Having signed for Bournemouth as a centre-back, Case has been converted to a right-back.

"I feel I am more suited to right-

back, but I can play right across the back four," he added. "I enjoy the freedom at right-back. I like getting forward and being involved in attacks."

"I might take a while to break into the first team squad, but as long as I work hard, show that I am willing to listen to what the coaches say and take it on board, I hope I can get into the side at some point next season."

The form of the Cherries work experience boys has been a highlight of New Milton's Sydenhams Premier campaign and secretary Richie Pippard said: "It reflects well on our club that Bournemouth only took on four players and three of them have been with us."

"Ryan, Alex and Harrison have been very much a part of the team

this season and it will be a shame to see them go."

"The other lad who's turned pro is Josh Wakefield who's also been playing non-League with Wimborne and Hamworthy."

Case joins four other Basingstoke-born players in the professional game.

Midfielder Tom Cleverley has endured an injury-hit season with Manchester United but is seen as a potential England prospect.

Striker Rowan Vine is currently on loan at League Two side Gillingham with his QPR contract due to end in the summer.

Ex-Saints defender Olly Lancashire is a member of League One Walsall's first-team squad, while midfielder Josh Payne is impressing after signing for League Two Aldershot Town.

TURN TO BACK PAGE FOR TODAY'S NON-LEAGUE RESULTS

Non-league Football

CITY OWNER DESPERATE FOR MORE TITLE SUCCESS

Wendy Gee

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

CLUB owner Paul McCarthy is convinced Winchester City can go a step better than Poole Town in the Southern Division One South & West next season.

Poole, the promoted Sydenhams Premier Division champions of 2010/11, have wasted no time acclimatising to the next level having secured at least a top-three finish and a play-off place at the first time of asking.

It's a fabulous achievement by Tommy Killick's Dolphins, but McCarthy reckons that, with a couple of quality summer signings, Winchester can better it after claiming this season's Wessex crown.

"Tommy Killick's done a great job at Poole, they're a real good team and a strong outfit, and it shows what clubs going up from the Wessex League can achieve," he said.

"I believe that the team we've already got at Winchester would finish top five in the league above and, with a couple of additions, we'll win it," he predicted.

"We want to achieve more. This club is going places and I hope the fans can appreciate what we're doing here."

McCarthy plans to sign his entire squad on contract next season – including prolific ex-Saints marksman Jamie White who needed a hat-trick at Fareham today to break Andy Forbes's all-time Wessex Premier scoring record of 55.

"If we want to win the league again – and, believe me, we want to – I can't be having players lured away," he said.

"It's not that we would stand in anyone's way of progressing, but we just need that bit of security going forward."

In the case of White, whose current deal runs out this summer, McCarthy, below, is ready to offer "superior to Conference South money" to get him back on contract.

City's owner is convinced the Harefield goal machine will be heading back to the Football League during the course of next season. And when that day comes, he wants to ensure that Winchester are suitably compensated for helping to get his career back on track.

White looked to have a highly promising future at Southampton until a cruel spate of injuries shattered his dreams. But since returning from a stint in Australia last autumn, his Winchester goalscoring heroics have made him one of the most talked-about players on region-



NEW DEAL: Winchester City's Jamie White, left.

I believe that the team we've already got at Winchester would finish top five in the league above and, with a couple of additions, we'll win it"

al non-League scene.

Several Conference and Football League clubs have sent scouts to watch him and he spent part of the season training with AFC Bournemouth.

"Jamie's coming towards the end of his contract and we've offered him a new one which we would like him to sign," McCarthy explained.

"He will go to another club eventually, but if he doesn't sign again with us we've got no bargaining power. And after all the time and effort we've put into rebuilding his career, we don't want to end up with nothing."

"We've offered him a fantastic contract and we feel he owes us one more signature."

"It's not that we'll try and keep him. We've already got him trials with League clubs and the AFC Bournemouth thing is not dead."

"If next season he does the same thing again and scores goals for us in the Southern League, we think it's inevitable he will go."

"He's gone over two years now without injury which gives clubs a bit more confidence about signing him."

Winchester are also keen to keep their second White – ex-Reading, Gillingham and Eastleigh frontman Andrew – on board.

"Andrew's intimated he'll sign," said McCarthy. "He's only just turned 20 and he's a bit fragile, whereas Jamie White's a bit more hardy and worldly."

Salisbury revamp youth structure

SALISBURY City have revamped their youth structure.

Michael Cooper has been named as head of youth development with the aim of offering boys and girls a development path from under-six to adult football.

Next season the club will once again have a reserve team and the best of the youth players are expected to fill it.

"The current youth section has had a successful season and the plans can only help improve the youth section and benefit the local community," said Cooper, right.

Whites manager Darrell Clarke added: "I brought Michael to the club to improve our links with the youth and he is doing a fantastic job."

"Hopefully the youth development pathway will produce players for the first team."

Each child representing Salisbury will have benefits including full matchday training and kit, a season ticket and free Junior Whites membership.

Non-league News

Give Groves a go

BRENDON King and Matt Groves should be given the opportunity to take Evo-Stik Premier outfit Weymouth into next season – according to Nigel Biddlecombe.

The Weymouth chairman, who signed the ownership of the club over to a community trust earlier this month, believes retaining the management duo would offer the Terras much-needed stability.

Ultimately, though, it will come down to a board decision.



King and ex-Eastleigh striker Groves, pictured, initially agreed five-year contracts under the Rolls regime back in February, but those deals were later declared null and void on legal grounds.

Since the change in the boardroom, the Terras have claimed just nine points from their last 12 league games, raising concerns about the ability of the coaching staff.

But with last Saturday's 2-1 victory over Hitchin Town securing their Premier Division future, Biddlecombe said: "I would like to see Brendon and Matt continue what they have started."

"Hopefully, if we can give them a settled platform to do the job properly, they can then deliver on a more consistent basis."

Wessex refs promoted

NO fewer than seven Sydenhams Wessex League referees have been promoted to Level 3 for next season – the highest in the league's history.

The magnificent seven are Ben Cobb from Poole, Andy Dine from Portchester, Aaron Moody and Sam Ogles, both from Chandler's Ford, Tony Foster from Portchester, Mark Lucie from Havant and Portsmouth's Casamir Nzenga.

A Sydenhams spokesman said: "The League extends its congratulations and best wishes to them for next season."

Horndean get friendly
HAVING secured Sydenhams Premier survival, Horndean are already looking towards 2012/13.

The Five Heads Park outfit have announced a pre-season friendly against Eastleigh on Friday, July 20 (7.30pm).

EMAIL PICTURES TO echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Whites pair stay on
PLAYER-of-the-year Ryan Brett and fellow defender Brian Dutton have committed their futures to Salisbury City.

Twenty-one-year-old Brett, pictured below, who joined the Whites in 2010 following his release from Plymouth Argyle, has signed a new one-year deal for the Blue Square Bet South club.

"Ryan has done well for us this season and has had to play in different positions in addition to left-back," said Whites boss Darrell Clarke.



Ex-Weymouth and Eastleigh man Dutton has also signed on again despite interest from elsewhere.

"He's had approaches from one or two other clubs, but he's opted to stay and help us build on the success we've had this season," said Clarke.

"He's an important part of the team and he can help us push on and raise our game for next season."

"Having already re-signed central defender Chris Giles, we are making good progress with next season's squad."

Robins cock-a-hoop
DOWNTON have enjoyed a record-breaking return to the Sydenhams Wessex League top flight.

Prior to taking on Lymington Town today, the Robins were guaranteed to finish sixth in the Premier

Division – two places higher than their previous best.

Skipper Josh Thomas, pictured left, headed in the only goal of the game

last Saturday as Downton saw off Horndean at Wick Lane.

Robins' reserves ended their Wyvern Division One West campaign with a 7-1 success at Totton & Eling, including a Simon Colborne hat-trick and a goal for 'keeper Tom Robinson.



EASTLEIGH boss Ian Baird doesn't mind admitting he will be glad to see the back of the 2011/12 season.

In all his time as a manager he has never experienced a rollercoaster ride quite like it.

When the season kicked off in August, the Stoneham Lane club had taken a cost-cutting change of direction, parting company with several core senior players and opting to run with a mix of youth and experience as part of a player development scheme.

Baird's brief then was to ensure Blue Square Bet South survival – and anything more would have been a bonus. But the picture changed dramatically just prior to Christmas when Bridle Insurance burst onto the scene with ambitious plans to turn Eastleigh into a Football League club.

Baird was furnished with funds to significantly strengthen the playing personnel and start building a squad capable of challenging for promotion to the Conference National – if not this season, then next.

Money was released to draft in quality additions like Damian Scannell, Bradley Bubb and Daryl McMahon and, predictably, expectations soared.

But Baird said all along that regrouping for a play-off push mid-season would be a tall order – and so it has proved.

Results have been consistently inconsistent with January's 4-0 high against Sutton United followed by an

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

embarrassing 6-1 low at Boreham Wood in March. And, football being football, it's invariably the manager who takes flak when things go wrong.

Some supporters have called for Baird's head, questioning his style of play. There have even been rumours on the fans' forum about possible replacements, the latest being ex-Saints and England boss Glenn Hoddle – linked with Bridle's Stewart Donald and Neil Fox when they first arrived at the club.

Throw in some major back-stage changes – notably the departures of director of football Dave Malone and chairman Paul Murray – and it's fair to say Baird has had more drama to contend with than your average Conference South manager.

Small wonder then that the ex-Saints and Leeds United striker can't wait to draw a line under 2011/12 and get on with planning for next season.

"This has probably been the most difficult season I've had," he admitted.

There have been so many ups and downs and 'he said, she said' situations going on. It's been quite draining really. At the start of the season we had one remit and we were getting



GLAD IT'S ALL OVER!

Baird happy to see back of season

things on an even keel. Then the new people came in with an influx of money and players and we had to try to bed it in and be successful.

"Certain objectives were set, some of which were unrealistic, and the criticism has been difficult to deal with," he confessed.

"As a manager, you know you are going to be criticised, but some of it has felt unjust because people don't know what's going on at the club or what's gone on in the past.

"Expectations have been unrealistic, but somehow we seem to have got through it.

"We've got the Hampshire Senior Cup final at St Mary's to look forward to now (versus AFC Totton on May 16) and hopefully we can make that a good night for the fans."

Disappointingly two of the four youth graduates offered two-year contracts by Eastleigh have rejected them. Ben Wilson and Matt Gray have decided to go.

Only Callum Casson has accepted the deal, while defender Will Aimson's on-off scholarship at Hull City is likely to go through this coming week.

"The club offered two-year deals and decent remuneration and we're extremely disappointed that Ben and Matt have turned it down," said Baird. "They obviously have their own reasons and we wish them well."



BAIRD

Murphy makes the marathon

EASTLEIGH secretary Ray Murphy took six hours and 46 minutes to complete Sunday's 2012 Virgin London Marathon.

It wasn't nearly as quick as he'd been hoping for, but had it not been for his good friend and physio, David Penny, he wouldn't have run at all.

Murphy was in deep despair 72 hours before Marathon day, barely able to move due to shooting pains in his right leg.

But he knew that if any man could help him it was Penny – affectionately known as Doctor Death – whom he had known from their stints together at Bashley, Winchester City and Eastleigh.

Murphy, who was staying with his sister in London when the pains set in, dropped Penny a text at 5am in the morning and drove straight to his practice in Totton where his shocked friend



mocked: "If I can get you ready for Sunday, this could be my biggest ever achievement."

But Penny – physio at Romsey Town this season – did indeed work his magic, enabling Murphy to join the 37,500-strong Marathon field.

"It was hard work and I was in agony for absolute miles. It seemed endless," he said. "I wanted to beat my previous time of six hours six minutes, but it was evident inside the first mile that it was not going to happen."

"It took six hours and 46 minutes, but crossing that finish line was worth all the hard work that had been done through training, Dr Death's expertise and the sponsorship raised for two charities – Great Ormond Street Hospital and Saint Francis Hospice."

Murphy, who lost both his parents in a six-week period last year, has already raised nearly £2,500. Anyone wishing to contribute can do so via <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/raymurphy>

Local and national football fixtures for the week ahead

Sunday, April 29

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

Chelsea v QPR (1.30), Tottenham v Blackburn (4.00)

Monday, April 30

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

Man City v Man Utd (8.00)

EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Division 1 South & West Play-off semi-final: Gorseborough v Hungerford or Sholing.

SOUTHAMPTON SATURDAY VETERANS' CUP FINAL

Sporting BTC v Nursling (at GE Hamble FC,

7.30pm)

Tuesday, May 1

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

Liverpool v Fulham, Stoke v Everton

EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Totton v Bedford Town (if Totton win, play-off semi-final is Thursday).

Division 1 South & West Play-off semi-final: Poole Town v Hungerford or Sholing.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier: GE Hamble v Bournemouth.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Sunday, April 29

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal v Norwich (12.45)

NPOWER LEAGUE 1

Bournemouth v Preston, Charlton v Hartlepools, Chesterfield v Brentford, Exeter v Sheff Utd, Huddersfield v Yeovil, Leyton Orient v Rochdale, Milton Keynes Dons v Walsall, Notts County v Colchester, Oldham v Carlisle, Sheff Wed v Wycombe, Stevenage v Bury, Tramtree v Scunthorpe.

LEAGUE 2

AFC Wimbledon v Shrewsbury, Accrington

Senior Division: Colden Common v Sporting BW (6.30pm), Liss Athletic v Fleetlands (6.30pm).

Wednesday, May 2

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

Bolton v Tottenham (8.00) Chelsea v Newcastle

Thursday, May 3

HAMPSHIRE LEAGUE 2004 TROPHYMAN CUP FINAL

Broughton v Upham (at GE Hamble FC, 7.30pm)

Saturday, May 5

THE FA CUP WITH BUDWEISER

Final: Chelsea v Liverpool (at Wembley Stadium)

5.15pm

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

Burnley v Bradford, Burton Albion v Barnet, Crewe v Aldershot, Dag & Red v Bristol Rovers, Gillingham v Morecambe, Hereford v Torquay, Plymouth v Cheltenham, Port Vale v Oxford Utd, Rotherham v Northampton, Southend v Macclesfield

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Senior Division: AFC Stonem翰 v University of Portsmouth, Colden Common v Paulsgrove, QK Southampton v Liphook, Sporting BW v Liss Athletic.

Combination Division: Liphook v Sporting BW

TODAY'S NON-LEAGUE ACTION - SEE PAGE 23

Non-league Football

FAWLEY FAITH IS IN THE KIDS

FAWLEY AFC hope their young players will have learned from this season's flirtation with relegation.

Because, with no playing budget available, manager Colin Lane cannot see the average age of his squad getting any higher next term.

Lane admits he has found the going tougher than expected since he took over the Long Lane reins from Paul Wiltshire in February.

But having just about staved off the spectre of relegation, Lane has been handed the task of achieving next season

Wendy Gee

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

what he and Wiltshire had hoped to do this year.

"We all know it's been a disappointing season," he said. "Both me and Paul thought we would be fighting for tenth or 11th spot and, the way we flew off at the start of the season, I really thought we would."

"But around October time it was like someone pressed a button and the season finished."

"Breaking into the top ten is

harder than I thought.

"We were sixth after four games, then we went down to around 12th or 13th and then down again from there."

"I've never been in a relegation battle before, even when I was playing. But a lot of it is down to the fact that 40 to 50 per cent of our players have never played Wessex Premier football before. They're young lads of 20 and under and they'll learn from it."

"I hope so, for the club's sake, because no one likes being down there."

While Lane is determined to add at least seven to his squad this summer, the Oilers will continue to be fuelled by youth.

"Next year we will still be a young team," said Lane.

"Fawley don't pay money so I'd find it hard to attract experienced players—plus it's a long, dark road down here."

"I live in West End and it's a 40-mile round trip to Fawley so it's difficult to get players in from elsewhere."

"If I can get a 50-50 mix between Watersiders and non-Watersiders that would be ideal."

"I'd like to keep all the current squad together, but I've got a feeling we might lose one or two."

New goalkeeper

"We've got a 16-man squad at the moment but we need 22 because you've got to take into account injuries, suspensions and work commitments."

"It hasn't helped that half the reserves are not signed on first-team forms, but next year we hope the first and reserve teams will train together and players will come through."

In an ideal world, Lane will bolster the ranks with two new forwards, three midfielders and a couple of defenders.

He may also need a new goalkeeper with Adam Tong likely to return to his parent club Sholing.

Tong suffered knee ligament damage against Blackfield & Langley two Fridays ago, forcing the game to be abandoned and replayed in midweek.

"Adam's on crutches and will be out for a couple of months through the summer," said Lane. "Then I think he'll go back and do pre-season with Sholing and stay there next year."



Non-league News

Shaw can't deny City

WAYNE Shaw was a popular figure during his days as a goalkeeping coach at Salisbury City.

But there was no room for sentiment last Saturday as the Whites avenged October's 5-0 reverse at Sutton United by defeating Paul Doswell's promotion-hunting Us 3-1 at the Raymond McEnhill Stadium.

Sutton went one up through top scorer Craig Watkins in the first minute, but the game turned after Us' former Havant goalkeeper Kevin Scriven had been shown a straight red for bringing down Dan Fitchett with 38 minutes gone.

That forced Totton-based Shaw, pictured, to take over and, after a shaky start, the big man pulled off two great saves from Stuart Sinclair and Charlie Griffin to maintain the Surrey side's half-time advantage.

But there was no stopping Salisbury after the break as they punished the ten men with a Marvin Williams hat-trick to claim a welcome Blue Square Bet South victory.

For Salisbury boss Darrell Clarke, it was the perfect way to bring the curtain down on the Whites' somewhat patchy home campaign.

"I'm delighted with that performance to end our home season and I'm sure the fans will be as well," he said. "We have had a mixed bag of home performances this season, for whatever reason, so it's great to finish with three points."

"The only thing I could fault was in the first minute when we conceded a sloppy goal. But, apart from that, I thought we were by far the better team."

"Their keeper deservedly got sent off and that changes the game to a certain degree, but we played really well in patches and finished off the job well in the second half."

"I thought we thoroughly deserved the points on the balance of play."

"Our away form in the last 12 games has been outstanding and today we've performed well at home against a top team who are in the play-offs. I hope supporters will remember this performance and come along and support us in their numbers next season."

Sutton's former Eastleigh boss Doswell had a different view of Scriven's dismissal, stating: "I thought he was unlucky. Kevin is adamant that he didn't touch the player and we had several covering defenders."

"Wayne Shaw hasn't been on the bench much recently because we've wanted to give as many outfield players a chance as possible, but for important games he'll always be in the squad. He did well when he came on—he had to. Although people make comments about his size, I know he'll always do a good job if called on."



JASON PRIOR: Six months on sidelines.

Prior tipped to recover from unlucky break

AFC WIMBLEDON frontman Jason Prior has been ruled out for at least six months after X-rays confirmed a double leg break.

The former Moneyfields and Bognor striker, who looked destined for a January move to Eastleigh until going for trials with Newcastle United, suffered the injury during the Dons' 1-1 draw at Crawley on April 14. It followed a rash challenge by home midfielder Hope Akpan.

The 23-year-old underwent a successful operation and is recuperating at home.

"I have dealt with tibia fractures before with private patients and they have been able to get back to a good standard in their chosen sports. Hopefully it will be the same with Jason," said Dons physio Mike Raynor.

"It will be six months minimum for him. He has a nail fixing the fracture site through his tibia bone (shin) and we have to wait for the two bone ends to knit together. The fibula is left to heal properly on its own."

"We got him back when he had his knee problem and we will get him right again. Hopefully he will be back in a Wimbledon shirt in the near future."

Dons boss Terry Brown added: "Jason will obviously be gutted, but he is still a young man who can come back from this."

"I spoke to Jack Pearce at Bognor and Jason had never missed a game for five years. But he comes to us and gets injured in this first game and is out for six weeks and now he has broken his leg. It is really bad luck."



Slick striker would oil Fawley wheels

FAWLEY AFC boss Colin Lane need only look at the Sydenham Wessex League website to see what the Oilers have been lacking this season.

A couple of clicks onto the Premier Division's top scorers' list following last weekend's round of fixtures – and there was not a single Fawley name in sight.

What's even more depressing is that Fawley's goal tally going into today's game at Moneyfields is just a few more than Winchester City's prolific 46-goal marksman Jamie White has managed single-handedly.

Hardly surprising then that a proven goal scorer will feature high on Lane's list of squad additions this summer.

Lane, who stepped up from the role of assistant boss following Paul Wiltshire's February departure, admitted: "Lack of goals has been our problem all season.

"We should have gone out and looked for another forward earlier. The goals we've conceded are similar to the teams in ninth or tenth place, but then you look at goals scored and they've got 20 or 30 more than us."

While most managers would love some extra pounds money-wise to enhance their strike force, Lane believes that fewer pounds weight-wise could be the solution for Fawley.

If ex-Sholing frontman Darren Morris stays and gets back to his ideal weight after long-term knee

Non-league Football

Scammell is to step aside at Hammers

BRUCE Scammell is hoping his successor can take Hamworthy United to the next level after announcing his decision to step down as chairman of the Sydenhams Premier club.

Scammell, who has been associated with the Hammers for more than 20 years, recently announced he would relinquish his position at the end of the season.

The most successful chairman in the club's recent history, Scammell has overseen the Hammers' rise from the Dorset Combination to the Wessex League, writes Neil Perrett.

And during his six-year stewardship, the club has twice been crowned champions of the Dorset Premier League, won the Dorset Senior Cup and the Wessex League Cup and started entering the FA Cup and FA Vase tournaments.

Former bosses Alex Pike and Phil Simkin, currently at Gosport Borough and Dorchester Town respectively, have progressed to manage at a higher level. And a number of players – including Nathan and Michael Walker, Ryan Dovell, Warren Byerley, Micky Hubbard and George Webb – have all moved up the non-League pyramid during Scammell's time in the chair.

Now, at 59, Scammell says he has taken the club as far as he can.

"I am not finishing with the club, but I want to step down as chairman and want to be able to carry on watching the team and enjoying it from a different angle," he said.

"It is a wonderful club and is heading in the right direction.

"I believe somebody with drive and ambition might just take us forward."

Looking back on his time at Hamworthy, Scammell added: "When I came on board I wanted us to start winning a few things – and we did. The arrival of Alex Pike as manager certainly helped. Phil Simkin did well for a long time and kept things ticking over until we parted company.

"When (current boss) Simon Browne came in, we were rock bottom of the Wessex League.

"But he kept us up in his first season and has made giant strides since he has been here.

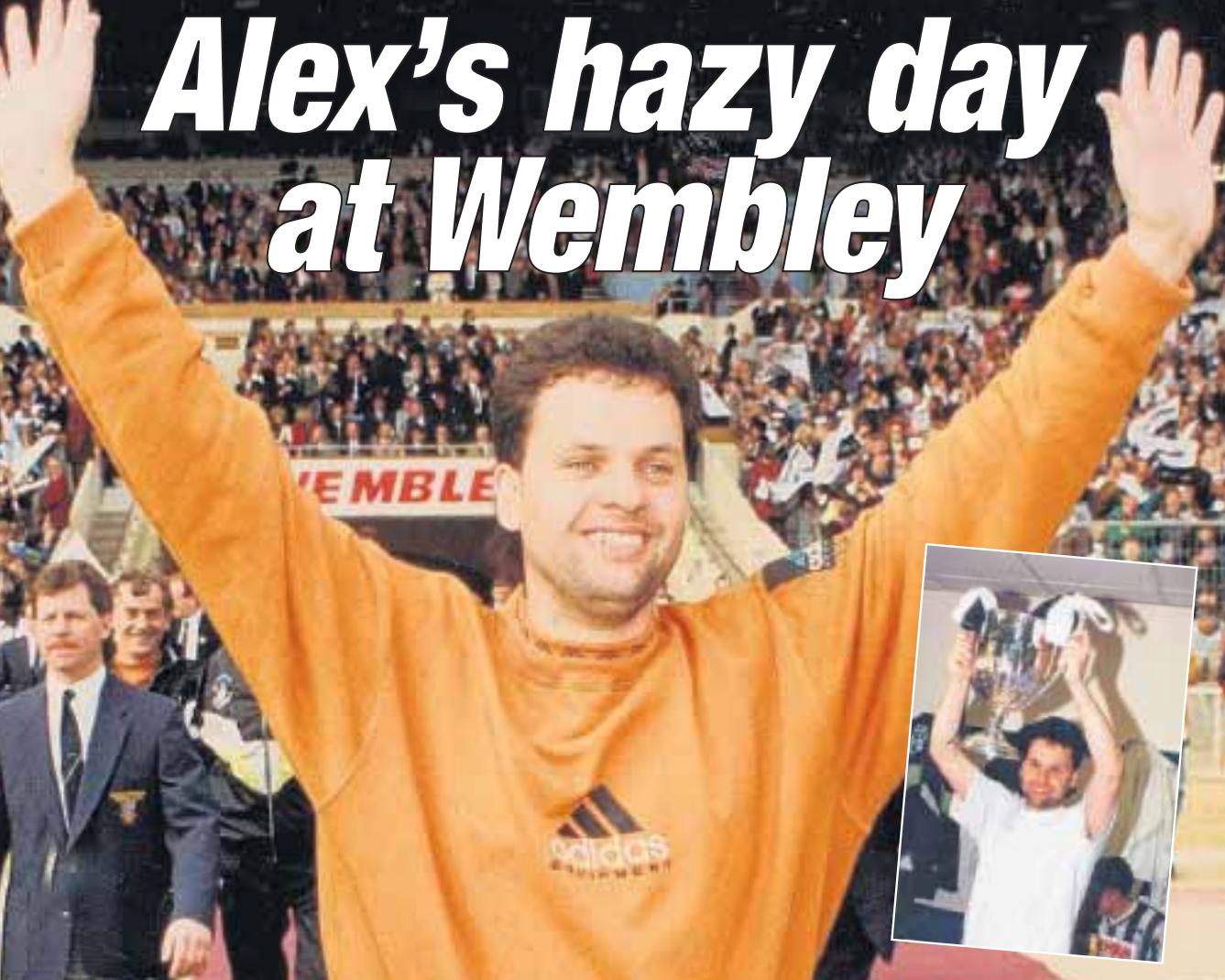
"Our facilities are good enough to go higher and we would love to do that if we could get the infrastructure right.

"But you have got to be sensible and can't spend money you haven't got."

"I have always prided myself on the club being well run financially and whoever takes on the chairmanship will find it in a healthy condition."



PHIL SIMKIN



SIPPING champagne in a Wembley bath, Alex Pike conducted his post-match interviews.

"I'm drunk and it's lovely," he rejoiced, having broken a seven-year stint without alcohol to toast Wimborne Town's famous FA Vase triumph.

Twenty years on from that glorious day in the capital, it is no wonder that the magical memories remain a little hazy for the ex-Magpies manager.

"At that particular time, I was a teetotaller," Pike explained, speaking to the *Daily Echo* two decades after Wimborne's national stadium success.

"When we won, the lads got me a bottle of champagne and my thoughts from after the game are very sketchy to say the least.

"I remember trying to be interviewed in one of the individual baths in the Wembley changing rooms. I don't think it was one of my best interviews, put it that way!"

Now manager of Gosport Borough in the Southern League, outspoken Pike has lost none of his sense for a sound bite.

"I can remember the lead up to it and the game itself," he recalled, reflecting on the 5-3 final victory over Guiseley in 1992.

"I was lucky enough that it was in my first real season as a senior manager and that has always given



WIMBORNE'S 1992 Vase winners: Back row (left to right): Steve Richardson, Nicky Bridle, Robbie Beacham, Kevin Leonard, Mark Allan, Andy Taplin, Bradley Horner, Alex Pike (manager), Nick Jennings (general manager). Front: Phil Langdown, Simon Lynn, Trevor Ames, Dominic Barrett, Tommy Killick, Jamie Sturgess

me a barometer to see how the other seasons have gone.

"The Vase anniversary also celebrates 20 years of me being a senior manager – which makes me feel old. I used to sign the fathers, now I am signing the sons!"

Pike keeps in touch with his Wembley winners and says they will always share a special relationship.

He said: "What we achieved has given us that bond. We still see a lot of one another."

"We lost Tim Balch, which was really sad, but apart from that we are all local and we still see one



another and bump into one another."

It is clear Pike still treasures his Wembley victory – even if he is unable to paint the most vivid picture of it. And it remains an important chapter in south coast football record books, with no club managing to match the feat.

In the 20 years since, many teams have tried unsuccessfully to follow in the footsteps of the Cuthbury heroes.

"I am sad and surprised to be honest," admitted Pike.

"For the three years that Poole Town won the Wessex League, I

felt sure that with Tommy Killick and his experience, they would emulate it.

"I was involved with local radio, covering Poole's semi-final home leg against Whitley Bay, and I honestly felt that they would go on and get to the final."

"It was quite sad that they didn't because for the hard work they had put in for years at that level, I felt they deserved to get there."

"But it just goes to show what a remarkable achievement it was for us in 1992."

If only he could remember all of

Non-league Football

When Hampshire ruled

FOR those of us of a certain age, the pinnacle of football at local level was the old Hampshire League Division One.

Prior to the demise of 'A' sides of the local Football League clubs, defections to higher leagues plus the inception of the Wessex League in 1986, Hants 1 was simply the best, writes JOHN LEE.

Throughout the fifties, sixties and seventies it boasted clubs advancing to the second round proper of the FA Cup and to the semi-final of the Amateur Cup.

Many teams were semi-pro – among them Saints, Reading and Bournemouth 'A' sides.

Other strong teams of the era included Bournemouth Gasworks, Gosport Borough, Alton Town, Fareham Town, Andover, Totton, Basingstoke Town, Thorneycroft, island teams Newport, Cowes and Ryde Sports and the late, still lamented, Sholing Sports (Birch Lawn), Pirelli General (Dew Lane) and more.

At one time, before the onset of competition from the likes of TV and other diversions, crowds thronged the touchlines with Newport often attracting over a thousand spectators to their Church Litten ground.

Back in the early 1960s the team I have supported for over 50 years was gaining prominence in county football.

Brockenhurst, who owned their ground in the heart of the village at Grigg Lane, were regularly attracting crowds of over two hundred with a brand of exciting, attacking football that carried all before them.

Grabbed headlines

Names such as 'Ben' Lyon, Derek Knott, Rodney Nineham and the late Brian Ambrose grabbed the headlines.

Help from the village community and a dedicated, hard-working committee led by chairman Cyril Otter JP (who still supports the club) was the catalyst for astute manager Jim Lawford to develop and improve the team over many years.

A wonderful character, Jim will always be remembered for leading the Badgers to the Hants 1 championship in 1976.

It was indeed a great achievement for a purely amateur village outfit.

The camaraderie Jim engendered in his players lives on in the well organised golf days for the stars of yesteryear.

Jim's son, Roger, who featured for the Badgers in their Hants League days as a powerful centre forward with a rocket shot that led to trials with Saints, helps former long serving full back Mike Kimber and gloveman and former Pompey youngster Eddie Tomkins make it all



BROCKENHURST, 1970S. Back row:- Cyril Otter, Jack Hull, Steve Lawford, John Hallam, Ted Perfect, Selby Dando, Jim Lawford, Alf Grace, Brian McQuoid, Ian Ferrett, Trevor Clark, Harry Lee. Front row: John Lee, Jimmy Needham, Mike Ackling, Dave Dear, Bill Paramore, Malcolm Renyard, Peter Richardson. Mascot: Michael Browning.



BADGERS, 1970s (above):

Back (from left) Ian Ferrett, Trevor Clark, Cyril Otter, Keith Lawford, John Harris, Mike Lewis, John Dovey, Geoff Browning, Jack Hull, John Willson, Brian Marwood. Front: Jim Lawford, Malcolm Renyard, Kieron O'Donnell, Brian Pardey, Steve Hansford, Bill Paramore, Harry Lee, Frank Jeans. Mascot: Michael Browning

happen.

They all meet twice a year at a variety of courses.

I am convinced that many, if playing today, would feature in the Southern League or higher.



BROCKENHURST, 1970S. Back (from left): Harry Lee, Mike Lewis, Brian Ambrose, David Marsh, Steve Satherley, Mike Kimber, Jim Lawford. Front row: Barry May, Bobby Stephens, Roger Lawford, Brian Pardey, Bill Paramore, Mick Reeves.

Home draw suits Killick

TOM Killick knows that Poole Town will have to rewrite the Southern League record books to win promotion.

The Dolphins were guaranteed a second or third-placed finish going into today's final round of Division One South & West matches, ensuring them home advantage in the play-off semi-finals.

However, the omens are not good because since the inception of the division in 2006, the five promoted clubs have all finished either fourth or fifth.

Sholing, one of Poole's play-off rivals this season, lost last year's final at home to Frome Town – and that despite finishing 16 points clear of the Somerset outfit in the league and boasting an awesome home record of 19 wins from 20 league games.



It was a similar story for AFC Totton, who were twice beaten by lower ranked sides – Didcot and Cirencester – in the play-offs before finally winning promotion as South & West champions last term.

"I am surprised by the statistics," admitted Killick. "If you look at the league table, home records are much better than away ones.

"Maybe players feel the pressure more in one-off play-off games."

"The expectancy levels are going to be higher and the away team may feel slightly more relaxed. But, irrespective of recent history, I would much rather play at home."

"We would get a big crowd and I think that would be an advantage."

Alex keen to stay in Town

ALEX Baldacchino is keen to put down some roots and would consider dropping anchor at Poole Town.

The 21-year-old striker is dual-registered with no fewer than three different clubs – Poole, New Milton Town and his parent club Havant & Waterlooville.

He recently joined Poole's promotion bid after plundering 28 goals in 34 games for New Milton in the Wessex League.

The Portsmouth-based frontrunner said: "I have been with Havant for a long time and they wanted me to get some experience in men's football this season."

"I played every week for New Milton and scored a few goals."

"It takes time to settle at a new club and that's what I have been doing at Poole."

"Once they get used to the way I play, hopefully they will see the benefits."

He added: "I would prefer to stay at one club, but will have to see what happens with Havant."

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Comrades	18	12	2	4	45	31	38
Forest Town	18	11	1	6	50	33	34
Nursling	18	10	3	5	37	27	33
Southampton Uni	18	10	2	6	38	21	32
AFC Hittingbury	18	8	2	8	49	45	26
Cutbush Athletic	18	5	3	10	33	67	18
London Airways	18	4	1	13	26	49	13
Bishopstoke WMC	18	3	3	12	31	46	12
BTC Soton	18	1	1	16	16	54	4
Netley CS Res	22	19	3	0	85	11	60
Cadnam United	20	16	3	1	92	23	51
Thornhill HK	19	13	3	3	77	36	42
Lyndhurst	20	13	2	5	60	28	41
White Horse NM	21	11	1	9	65	46	34
Hythe Aztec	20	10	2	8	62	57	32
Hedge End Town	21	9	3	10	55	66	27
Durley Res	22	7	1	14	45	90	22
Comrades Res	22	5	4	3	38	66	19
Burridge AFC	21	5	3	13	47	53	18
BTC Soton Res	22	4	2	16	23	75	14
Mich & T Res	22	1	1	20	21	119	4

JUNIOR 1

Wombles	17	10	6	1	41	21	36
South City United	17	10	3	4	43	28	33
S'pton Energy	17	9	5	3	66	45	32
Park Sports	17	9	3	5	49	31	30
AFC Grains	18	7	5	6	38	29	26
Veracity Vipers	17	7	3	7	46	40	24
Compton	18	6	4	4	8	46	51
East Boldre	17	6	3	8	37	41	21
Braishfield	17	5	2	10	24	36	17
Otterbourne A	17	0	0	17	11	79	0

JUNIOR 2

H End Rang Res	16	12	2	2	37	12	38
OK S'pton A	16	12	1	3	46	16	37
Langley Manor	16	8	3	5	46	22	27
Solent Saints	16	7	2	7	37	40	23
Questmap	16	6	3	7	40	40	21
Chamberlayne Ath	16	6	2	8	29	36	20
Hamble United	16	5	4	7	27	32	19
Inmar	16	4	1	11	24	45	13
Wellow	16	3	0	13	24	67	9

JUNIOR 3

Forest Town Res	20	13	6	1	62	32	45
Chandlers Fd Rang	20	14	2	4	79	34	44
FC Wellington	20	12	2	6	50	32	38
Compton Res	19	11	4	4	47	30	37
Riverside	18	10	5	3	58	19	35
Infinity Res	17	7	5	7	44	53	26
AFC Gordons	20	5	1	14	32	61	16
Bricklayers AFC	20	4	4	12	26	61	16
Capital	20	4	1	15	32	65	13
Warsaw Wasps*	20	7	5	8	40	33	12
Cricketers Eastgh	20	3	1	16	23	67	7

JUNIOR 4

Harefield	18	15	2	1	87	17	47
West Totton	18	15	1	2	72	25	46
AFC Gulf Western	17	13	2	2	54	19	41
Chandlers Ford	18	9	4	5	50	36	31
Botley Village Res	18	8	2	8	44	54	26
Good Companions	18	5	2	11	39	50	17
Brigadier Gerard	18	5	1	12	31	58	16
Priory Rovers	18	4	1	13	27	57	13
New Forest	17	3	4	10	21	57	13
Cricketers Fair Oak	18	2	1	15	24	76	7

JUNIOR 5

Bitterne Pk Hotel*	18	13	2	3	69	28	38
Stanton FC	18	13	1	4	70	40	37
Botley Village A	18	12	1	5	62	38	37
Horton Heath	18	11	3	4	61	37	36
Upham Res	18	9	0	9	60	47	27
Athletico Romsey	18	6	4	8	40	37	22
Freemantle AFC	18	6	4	8	46	55	22
Hamble United Res	18	5	5	8	28	50	20
Lon Airways Res	18	2	1	15	21	70	7
Riverside Res	18	1	3	14	20	75	6

JUNIOR 6

New Forest Res	19	17	1	1	88	27	52
S G Sports	20	16	1	3	83	38	49
Coxford Jets	20	13	1	6	61	49	40
Sporting Wessex	20	11	2	7	50	36	35
Burridge Village	20	10	2	8	58	38	32
Amphill Athletic	20	9	4	7	61	51	31
AFC Station	19	7	3	9	38	39	24
Braishfield Res	20	6	3	11	51	62	21
AFC Soton	20	5	2	13	40	66	17
Mich & T A	20	2	2	16	25	102	8
Mechanics	20	2	1	17	42	87	7

VETERANS A

Questmap Vets	17	14	1	2	60	19	43
Nursling Res	17	14	1	2	47	14	43
Sporting BCT A	16	13	2	1	41	11	41
Sholing A	17	10	1	6	46	29	31
G E Aviation A	18	7	2	9	38	35	23
Redlynch & W Utd	18	6	3	9	30	48	21
QK Southampton	18	4	1	13	32	34	20
BTC Soton Vets	18	4	1	13	24	48	13
Golden Common	17	4	0	13	30	45	12
Old Tauntonians	18	2	1	15	19	84	7

VETERANS B

Langley Tavern A	22	13	6	3	69	30	45
Locks Heath	22	14	3	5	56	22	45
B Waltham Dyn	21	11	7	3	64	41	40
Hedge End Rangers	19	11	3	5	49	40	36
RS Winchester	20	11	2	7	44	31	35
Hythe Aztec	18	10	2	6	49	38	32
Compton Vets	22	8	7	3	38	41	31
Langley Manor A	20	6	2	12	38	41	20
Northend United	22	5	5	12	30	57	20
AFC Stonham	20	5	2	13	31	54	17
Albion Sports	21	4	2	15	15	52	14
Wildern O B	21	1	9	11	33	67	12

VETERANS C

Sporting BCT C	20	16	1	3	66	17	49
GE Aviation C	20	16	1	3	56	21	49
Badsey Park	20	13	2	5	57	32	41
Michelmersh & T	20	13	1	6	50	34	40
Sholing B	20	11	2	7	43	26	35
Royal Mail	20	8	2	10	37	41	26
Winchester O B	20	8	1	11	26	32	25
Langley Tavern B	20	4	6	10	43	64	18
Redbridge O B	20	5	2	13	41	73	17
Priory Rover	20	3	1	16	21	63	10
Langley Manor B	20	1	5	14	26	63	8



Non-league Football

HAYWARD SATURDAY

Five-goal Flynn on Electric charge

STEVE Flynn was the five-goal star when DIVISION THREE champions and MA Hart Page Croft Cup winners Bournemouth Electric A brought the curtain down on an extremely successful campaign by trouncing Winton Borough 9-0.

Dan Watton, Matt Wallace, Sam Phillips and Matty Ings were the other Electric marksmen.

Luke McArdle rattled in four when Bournemouth Manor turned up the heat on PREMIER DIVISION leaders Portcastrian by walloping Bosuns Chair 6-0. Darren Spiers and Sam Goodwin were also on target for Manor who remain a point behind Ports with a game in hand.

Ben Virabi struck midway through the second half to give Portcastrian the verdict 1-0 against Parley Sports. Parley made Ports work hard for their three points and the league leaders are indebted to goalkeeper Richard Collins for pulling off a brilliant save to deny Parley a late equaliser.

Sway returned to winning ways with a 5-0 victory over Redlynch & Woodfalls United thanks to Josh Humphreys, Gareth Barnes, Dave Steadman, John Mulhearn (pen) and an own goal.

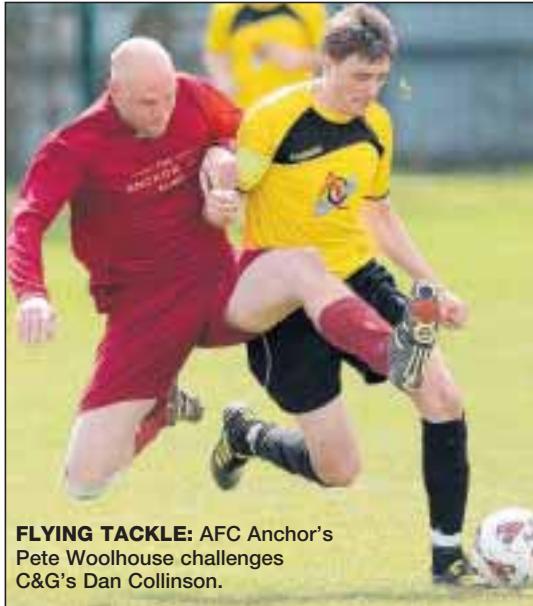
Mike Thompson gave second-placed Queens Park Athletic a first-half lead against Richmond Park Con but the DIVISION TWO champions came back with a couple of second-half goals from Mark Pudney to win 2-1.

Paul Morris struck for New Milton Linnets but they finish behind runners up Queens Park Athletic on goal difference after South Coast Demolition held them to a 1-1 draw through Steve Newman.

Sway Reserves netted through James Totczyk and Jesse Gould but they had to settle for a point when Tom Flynn scored twice to earn Mploy a 2-2 draw.

MA Hart Hayward Cup winners BU Staff need just one point from their two remaining games to become champions of DIVISION FOUR after Ben Cooper settled the issue 1-0 against Magpies.

Southampton & District Sunday Football League Junior Trophy final: C&G FC 3 AFC Anchor 2



FLYING TACKLE: AFC Anchor's Pete Woolhouse challenges C&G's Dan Collinson.



WINNER: C&G's Wayne Healey scores from the spot to make it 3-2 and celebrates, below left.

Photographs: Robin Jones

HEALEY HOLDS NERVE

By Tom Crocker

echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

A DRAMATIC late penalty from Wayne Healey ensured C&G FC took the honours in a real topsy-turvy cup final against AFC Anchor.

Anchor had led 2-1 but some set piece brilliance from C&G swung the game back in their favour.

Goal scorer Healey said: "It was a really good game. We went 1-0 up but gave away a penalty five minutes before half-time so went in level. We then fell 2-1 behind before a brilliant free kick from Alex Pattison made it 2-2. Then, with two minutes to go, we won a penalty which I scored!"

He added: "It was a massive team effort really. Everyone turned up and played their part."

And Healey is now hoping his side can use this win as a catalyst to kick on in the next campaign and achieve a league and cup double.

He said: "We had a slow start compared to last season and went on a losing streak of about six games but we have picked up towards the end of the season.

"We want to continue pushing forward (next season). We have a good group of lads who are all thriving to be a part of it. It looks like we will miss out on promotion this year but next year we want to win the league and hopefully retain this cup!"



SPOILS OF VICTORY: C&G FC with the cup.



LEFT: C&G FC's Lejay Giles-Pilgrim sends two AFC Anchor players the wrong way.



RIGHT: C&G FC's Dan Collinson and AFC Anchor's Pete Woolhouse battle for the ball.

TURN TO PAGES 36-37 FOR MORE SUNDAY FOOTBALL

Non-league Football

HAYWARD SUNDAY LGE

Warren KOs new champs

MARTIN Warren scored all three goals when defending PREMIER LEAGUE champions Branksome Con just got the better of their successors, Queens Park, 3-2.

Warren opened the scoring but Shahram Sam-Daliri struck twice to put Queens Park in front before the interval. Warren put Branksome on terms after the break but Sam-Daliri looked to have restored Park's lead in the closing stages but his effort was disallowed for offside. Branksome were then awarded a penalty which Warren converted to secure all three points.

Queens Park had already secured the Premier League title prior to the game.

Third-placed Branksome Railway netted through Sam Purdy but were beaten 2-1 by Queens Park Rovers whose goals came via Robbie Harber and Mark Goldsworthy.

Unbeaten DIVISION ONE leaders Shoulder of Mutton need just two points from their three remaining league games to clinch the title after Peter Pritchard hit four in their 7-0 triumph over Harry's Bar. Sam Goodwin (2) and Sam Elliott were the other marksmen.

Second-placed Foresters Arms kept the title race alive by subduing Bournemouth Electric 1-0 in their penultimate game of the season - Hisham Douik on target.

Tiegla Tiles netted through Sam Cole and Jack Barfoot in DIVISION TWO but AFC Burton shaded it 3-2 with goals from Ryan Attree (2) and Ryan Hirst while, in DIVISION THREE, Carlos Costa scored twice for tailenders Boscombe Celtic in their 3-2 defeat to Ferndown Locomotive whose goals came from Johnny Haines (2) and Keith Jackson.

The DIVISION FOUR championship goes right to the last game of the season with Specialist Lettings needing just a point against unbeaten Barton Wanderers at Fawcets Field on Sunday to take the title.

Lee Diaper, Lee Pearson, Danny Gibbons, Danny Young and George Knijff gave Lettings a 5-1 victory over Oakdale Con whose consolation goal came via Jace Latoro.

Meanwhile, Shaun Waterman and Ollie Luchoomun scored two each in Barton Wanderers' 6-1 drubbing of Victoria Cross with the other goals coming from Anthony Seeley and Paul Senior.

Gary Craig, Dan Beck, and Darryl Goodayle netted for JS West Moors but DIVISION SIX champions Kings Arms Wallisdown had the edge 4-3 thanks to Paul Conroy, Mark Beale, Shaun Brooke and Ross Grimes.

Charlie Foreman plundered four and Parris Simpkins bagged a hat-trick when runners up Townsend Spartans hammered Wimborne Magpies 11-2 with Joe Hadden (2), Nick Greenfield, and Simon Walsh also on target. Jack Geddes and Luke Richards were the Magpies marksmen.

DIVISION EIGHT champions and MA Hart Nicholas Read Cup winners Bournmouth Borough netted through Dan Bailey (2) and Gareth Bailey but went down 4-3 when Ryan Glasspool and Ian Maidment scored two apiece for Dean Park Inn.

Oliver Cottis struck for Ferndown Forest but A & T Athletic Reserves emerged 2-1 winners thanks to Jamie Tuvey and Ryan Mabey.

Kings Park Dynamos netted through Alex James but Alderholt kept their DIVISION NINE title hopes alive when they upended them 3-1 with goals from Tom Cranmer, Elliott Cromarty, and Matt Cole. Alderholt's two games against second placed Scott V in the space of five days will determine the destiny of the title.

Shane Barney was the seven-goal star of A & T Athletic A's 12-2 trouncing of Boscombe Celtic Reserves. Ashley Irving, Trevor Cook, Kyle Stacey, Lee Harding, and Clive Marshallsay were the other Athletic marksmen.

City of Southampton Sunday Football League DR Ryder Trophy final: Linden Tree 3 FC Railway 1



CUP OF JOY: Linden Tree celebrate DR Ryder Trophy final victory.

Daily Echo pictures by Stuart Martin Order no: 14278972



GETTING SHIRTY: Linden Tree's Lee Slade, right, celebrates his first goal.



LEFT: Linden Tree's Shahin Bani-Sadr, pictured, goes for goal. The rebound from his strike was netted by Lee Slade.

Order no:
14278837

RIGHT: Linden Tree's Kieran Walsh takes on FC Railway's Sam McCarthy.

Order no:
14278933

TREE-MENDOUS Slade hat-trick KOs Railway

LEE Slade was Linden Tree's hat-trick hero as they lifted the DR Ryder Trophy.

Slade scored all his side's goals in a 3-1 final victory over FC Railway at Romsey's Bypass Ground.

After a feisty start – ref Wayne Thomas booking Railway's Ben McHale and Slade – the latter opened the scoring on the half hour mark from a Matt Camfield cross.

Five minutes later it was 2-0 when Slade got the final touch to a goal-

mouth scramble.

But Railway hit back three minutes later when Mark Bond headed in a Mark Reeves cross.

Slade completed his hat-trick ten minutes into the second period.

Railway were presented with a route back into the game, but Dan Hancock fired his 70th minute spot-kick against the bar.

Despite his goals, Slade missed out on the man-of-the-match award. That went to his colleague Alex Sheath instead.



SEE MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO FOR MORE NON-LEAGUE

Non-league Football

Southampton & District Sunday Football League Charlie Godden Trophy final: Woodmill 5 Bishops Blaize 0



GOING LOW: Woodmill's Steve Allen scores a goal with a header and, right, Woodmill's Tommie Stringer (green/white) tussles with a Bishops Blaize opponent.

Daily Echo pictures by Stuart Martin Order nos: 14278356 (above) & 14278368 (right)



ALL SMILES: Woodmill with the Charlie Godden Trophy.

Order no: 14278595

WOODMILL COME ON STRONG *Spacagna leads second-half charge*

A SECOND half goal blitz gave Woodmill the Charlie Godden Trophy.

After a goalless first 45 minutes, Woodmill turned on the style to run out 5-0 winners against stunned Bishops Blaize at Romsey's Bypass Ground.

Woodmill had the first chance of the final but Phil Spacagna fired over when well placed after being played in by Jody Hoare.

After 20 minutes a mistake by a Woodmill defender let in David Kemp, who should have scored but shot straight at keeper Simon Tribe.

Spacagna shot over the bar again when well placed.

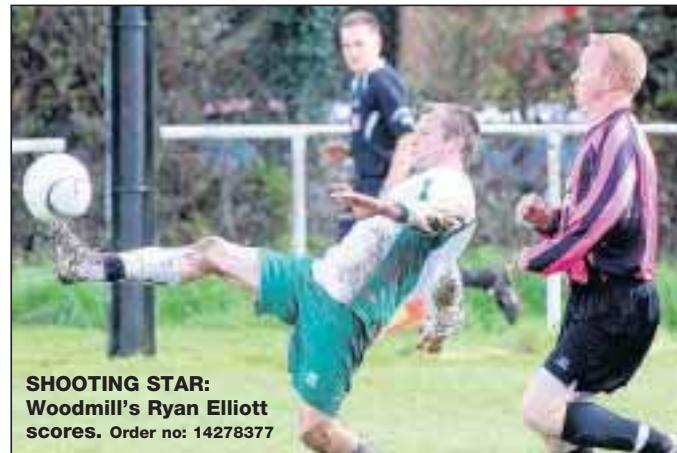
Bishops almost took the lead when, following a corner, Phil Hunt brought a great save from the keeper.

Woodmill opened the scoring shortly into the second half when Spacagna headed home a free kick.

They increased their lead when Bishops defender Ben Jacobs directed the ball past his own keeper.

Woodmill then went 3-0 up with Steve Allen scoring from the touchline - the ball sailing over the keeper's head.

Woodmill added a fourth when man-of-the-match Tommy Stringer headed in a cross from Jack Jewell. Number five soon followed when Ryan Elliott scored following a mix up in the Bishops defence.



SHOOTING STAR:
Woodmill's Ryan Elliott scores. Order no: 14278377

TURN TO BACK PAGE FOR TODAY'S NON-LEAGUE RESULTS



Still time to nominate grass-roots heroes

WITH just under two weeks to go until nominations close for the third annual FA Community Awards presented by McDonald's, Hampshire CFA CEO Neil Cassar is calling on the people of the county to get involved.

He said: "Grass-roots football is hugely important to the development of football at all levels in this country.

"Whether you are a referee, coach or player your first experience of the game will be in the grass-roots game but without the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, grass-roots football would cease to exist.

"It's fantastic that these awards recognise and celebrate the hard work of these important people."

The eight award categories are:

- Outstanding Contribution to Community Football Award
- Volunteer of the Year
- Young Volunteer of the Year
- Coach of the Year
- FA Charter Standard Community Club
- FA Charter Standard Development Club
- FA Charter Standard Club of the Year
- FA Charter Standard League of the Year

To find out more about the awards, read about last year's winners and nominate an individual club or league from your community, log onto hampshirefa.com or speak to the Hampshire CFA on 01256 853000 or Info@HampshireFA.com.

Nominations close on May 11 and a shortlist of candidates will be selected by a judging panel, which will include Sir Geoff Hurst.

Youth Football

WINCHESTER UNDER-13S DEFEAT SPANISH GIANTS



WINCHESTER Youth under-13 boys pulled off a spectacular 2-1 away win against the academy side of Spanish giants Atletico Madrid.

The Winchester boys reached the final of a tournament held at El Escorial just north of the Spanish capital last week, beating San Lorenzo comfortably.

But then they came across the strong, confident Atletico side.

And they sampled their first

taste of international football, lining up alongside their rivals for respective national anthems before playing the match against the backdrop of chanting Atletico supporters.

Winchester were not intimidated and matched their rivals pass for pass, closing them down and dominating the midfield.

The Winchester back four were solid throughout the game and gave Atletico few chances to break through.

Midfielders Jimmy Hawkings and Harry Bayles worked superbly together and scored a goal each going into half time.

Atletico pulled one goal back in a tense second half and Winchester goalkeeper Alejandro Arguelles made a couple of difficult match winning saves to keep his team ahead but the Winchester boys kept their nerve and ran out well-deserved winners.

Winchester have invited Atletico to a return match in Hampshire next season when they hope to host their own international tournament with teams from Hampshire taking on European clubs.

HELPLINES

■ WHITELEY Wanderers Youth Football Club are recruiting players to join their under-12, 13 and 14 boys teams (current school Years 6, 7 and 8) for the 2012/13 season.

Interested? Please contact Mark Balsdon on 07749 730128 or visit clubwebsite.co.uk/whiteleyjuniors.

■ BROOKHILL youth require players for the 2012/13 under-14 Tyro League season. If interested contact 07411 332358.

■ WINCHESTER Youth under-13s are always looking for good players - if you would like a trial please contact John Jowitt on 07768 742476.

■ HEDGE End Rangers under-11s blue are currently looking for players to join them for next season's Tyro League campaign.

If you are in Year 6 and have a willingness to learn from a professional coach twice a week at Wildern School, then please call Dave on 07770 411961.

On the Crest of a wave ...

GOAL happy Crestwood will complete an all-conquering under-16 season in grand style if they beat Salesian College in the Hampshire Schools FA Year 11 Cup final at Fratton Park on Monday week, May 7 (2pm).

The Boyatt Wood college team has won all ten matches this season, scoring 51 times and conceding only four goals, writes **MIKE VIMPANY**.

They won the Winchester & Eastleigh League, winning all five games against Thornden (1-0), Romsey (9-1), Mountbatten (5-0), Toynbee (6-0) and Wyvern (3-0).

They have been equally dominant in the Hampshire Cup, with Aidan Collins scoring ten times and Jordan Prince seven in a high scoring five-match run.

Crestwood began with a 2-0 win over Hounslow (Prince 2) before seeing off Kings', Winchester, 5-3, with doubles by Prince and Darren Street.

Tom Andrews' youngsters have swept all before them in the past three rounds, with four-goal Collins leading a 7-0 rout of



Woodlands, and Jamie Clarke and Collins each notching a brace in the 7-0 drubbing of Cantell.

Bay House were spared no mercy in the semi-finals, where Collins hit a hat-trick and Prince scored two more in a 6-0 win over the Gosport side.

CRESTWOOD COLLEGE UNDER-16s: Standing (from left): Ryan Kaijko, Manraj Birring, Luke Jones, Cameron Pearson, Jordan Hawkes, Dan Taylor, Sam Gristwood, Jack Geddes. Seated: Aidan Collins, Darren Street, Jordan Tyler, Jordan Prince (captain), Tinashe Chiguvare, Jamie Clarke, Liam Nash.

EMAIL SUMMER TOURNAMENT DETAILS TO echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Youth Football



CUP OF JOY: Winchester Youth under-14s celebrate their 3-2 extra time victory over Oakwood Terriers in the final of the Southampton & District Tyro League Challenge Cup. Jamie Howells and Sam Beadle (penalty) scored for Winchester in normal time with Harvey Thompson netting the winner in extra time.



EASTLEIGH FC REDS UNDER-12s: Defeated Salisbury City under-12s 1-0 in the final of the Hampshire Cup.

● Eastleigh FC Reds under-12s are looking for players to join the team for 2012/13 under-13 season. The team is coached by FA qualified level 2 coach. For more info ring 07900 987655 or visit eastleighjuniorsfc.co.uk/club.

AWAY THE LADS! STONEHAM CLINCH TITLE

AFC STONEHAM under-16s hit the road to clinch the City of Southampton Youth League Division 3 title with a 3-0 victory at Wyvern Youth.

From the opening kick the intentions of AFC Stoneham were broadcast by their favoured 4-3-3 attacking formation – left-winger Luke Cron looking the liveliest player on the pitch in the early stages of the match.

The hosts, though, created the first real opening with just five minutes on the clock. A clever chip over the top sent Wyvern's centre forward clear but he was prevented from pulling the trigger by a timely last-ditch tackle by Miles Hewitt.

This stirred the league leaders into action, Cron sending a pinpoint ball from left to right for the athletic Sam Adams to latch on to before firing a shot just over the bar.

Cold but bright conditions then changed to torrential rain, with Wyvern getting a strong foothold in the match. From an excellent display of counter attacking football Wyvern won a deserved corner. Making good use of the swirling wind the corner kick was cleverly lofted in to the Stoneham goal area, and had Dom Dewey not been at his best by tipping the ball over the top, then an upset might well have been on the cards.

Soon after, a hailstorm forced a suspension in play. From the restart, AFC Stoneham were quickest out of the blocks and went ahead on 18 minutes. Team captain Lynden Rooms played in Adams who powered towards goal before netting with a neat finish into the corner.

Adams made it 2-0 after finishing off a neat move started by Cron and AFC Stoneham maintained the advantage unto half-time.



KINGPINS: AFC Stoneham under-16s players and coaches with the City of Southampton Youth League Division 3 trophy.

AFC Stoneham centre half Adam Palmer was a star at both ends in the second half, firstly organising his back line to keep Wyvern at bay and then heading in a corner at the other end for 3-0.

With blustery conditions return-

ing, controlled football was made difficult and the game became a bit scrappy.

There was time for just one more highlight, Stoneham's Aaron Murray unleashing a 30-yard left foot strike that smashed against

the Wyvern bar – and then to safety.

AFC Stoneham manager Mark Sainsbury said: "The club takes great pride in the way the boys played, not just today but all season. "Six of the team came from our

feeder club, Granley FC, who last season finished well down in Division 5 of the Tyro League. To see that sort of player development is what we are all about.

"I'm made up for the whole team."

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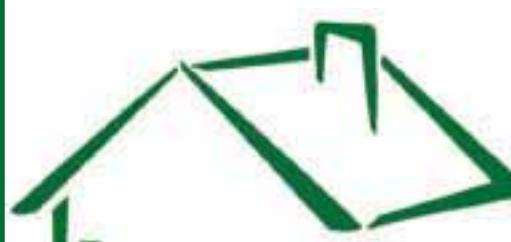
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Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



Hampshire Fixtures/Results 2012

APRIL	30 Surrey, h, FLt20	JULY	
12-15 Gloucestershire, home, LVCC - Hampshire lost by 33 runs.		6 Sussex (F), h, FLt20	
19-22 Glamorgan, SWALEC, LVCC - Hampshire won by 2 wickets.		8 Essex (F), h, FLt20	
26-29 Leicestershire, h, LVCC		11-14 Yorkshire, h, LVCC	
MAY		15 Durham, h, CB40	
2-5 Northants, Northampton, LVCC		17 Notts (F), Trent Bridge, CB40	
7 Glamorgan, h, CB40		19-22 Essex, Chelmsford, LVCC	
9-12 Derbyshire, h, LVCC		24/25 FLt20 quarter-finals	
16-19 Yorkshire, Headingley, LVCC		27-30 Kent, h, LVCC	
JUNE		AUGUST	
20 Scotland, Uddingston, CB40		6-9 Gloucestershire, Bristol, LVCC	
23-26 Glamorgan, h, LVCC		10 Glamorgan (F), SWALEC, CB40	
27 Somerset, Taunton, CB40		14 Somerset (F), h, CB40	
31 Nottinghamshire (F), h, CB40		15-18 Northamptonshire, h, LVCC	
JUNE		19 Surrey, h, CB40	
3 Surrey, KIA Oval, CB40		21-24 Leics, Grace Road, LVCC	
4 Scotland, h, CB40		24/25 FLt20 semi-finals/finals	
6-9 Kent, Tunbridge Wells, LVCC		27 Durham, Chester-le-Street, CB40	
14 Sussex (F), Hove, FLt20		SEPTEMBER	
15 Kent, Canterbury, FLt20		1 CB40 semi-finals	
19 Middlesex (F), h, FLt20		4-7 Essex, h, LVCC	
20 Surrey (F), KIA Oval, FLt20		11-14 Derbyshire, Derby, LVCC	
22 Kent (F), h, FLt20		15 CB40 final, Lords.	
27 Middlesex, Richmond, FLt20			
29 Essex (F), Chelmsford, FLt20			

KEY: LVCC (LV County Championship division two), CB40 (Clydesdale Bank40), FLt20 (Friends Life T20), F (floodlit)

Simon Walter

simon.walter@dailyecho.co.uk

CRICKET REPORTER

THERE have been more ups than downs in the career of long-serving Hampshire groundsman Nigel Gray.

One of the county's few survivors from Northlands Road, the 59-year-old has been one of the county's most recognisable characters for more than two decades.

Now in his 23rd season, he launched his well-deserved testimonial with patron Shane Warne in attendance at The Ageas Bowl on Friday night, fittingly at the end of the second day's play against Leicestershire – the county of his birth.

It says something for the respect in which he is held that he is only the third groundsman in Hampshire Cricket history to be awarded a testimonial, following in the footsteps of Jesse Hopkins (1922) and Ernie Sykes (1975).

Having moved south with his family aged six, Gray became an adopted son of Hampshire. He started life with the county back in 1989.

After graduating from Keele University with a geography degree, Gray was 'spotted' by two of Hampshire's other Old Tauntonians – chief executive Tony Baker and cricket committee chairman Charlie Knott – while working on pitches at Taunton's College for Hampshire County Council.

He soon became part of the fabric of Northlands Road and even lived there during the 1990s, next to the nets where the likes of Malcolm Marshall and Robin Smith honed their skills.

Nigel Gray is only the third groundsman in Hampshire's history to be awarded a testimonial.

Within two years of being appointed assistant to Tom Flintoff, he was promoted to head groundsman when his colleague returned to his native north east to work on Durham's new Riverside Ground at Chester-le-Street.

Gray's arrival coincided with one of the most successful periods in Hampshire's history.

Having won the 1988 Benson & Hedges Cup, Mark Nicholas's side added the Natwest Trophy in 1991, before lifting the B & H again the following year.

Gray had a growing trophy cabinet of his own during the 1990s, winning two ECB groundsman of the year awards.

"Northlands Road had a good reputation as a very secure batting pitch with lots of runs, quick outfield and high-scoring games – it wasn't the bowlers' place to be," he smiles.

"But it was such a well-established, flat square, it was very difficult to generate result wickets."

Gray's job became far more challenging when Hampshire moved from their quaint old home to what is now The Ageas Bowl at the turn of the century.

Like the Northlands Road bell –

This is star man Nige to ground control...

Long-serving head groundsman Nigel Gray reflects on his 23 action-packed seasons with his beloved Hampshire

which makes considerably more noise – he was transferred to West End in 2001, where his quiet diligence helped establish a ground that is the pride of the south.

But it has been far from easy. He readily admits the lowest point of his career being back-to-back games midway through the second season of first-class cricket at The Ageas Bowl, in July 2002.

The wicket used for Hampshire's match against India was so capricious Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid refused to bat in the second innings.

They considered the pitch too dangerous, even with James Tomlinson taken out of a Hampshire attack including the medium pace of James Hamblin, Will Kendall and Lawrie Prittipaul.

A few days later, Chris Tremlett and Lancashire's James Anderson both made the most of similar conditions, claiming their maiden first-class five-wicket hauls during a County Championship match.

The pitch was bad enough for Hampshire to be docked eight points.

"We obviously knew settling a new ground would take time but didn't envisage it taking as long as it did and didn't realise how big a challenge it would be," admits Gray, who lives in Botley with his wife Barbara.

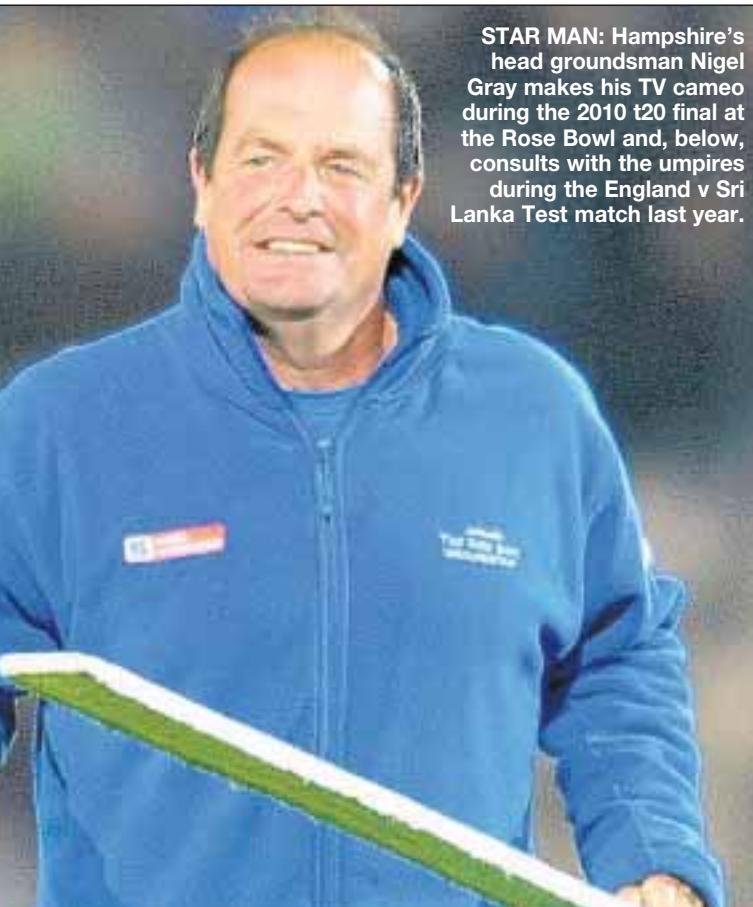
"We had a year when it wasn't easy. We left pitches a bit damp in the first year and then tried to be more adventurous by drying them out more in the second year to get more pace out of

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Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



STAR MAN: Hampshire's head groundsman Nigel Gray makes his TV cameo during the 2010 t20 final at the Rose Bowl and, below, consults with the umpires during the England v Sri Lanka Test match last year.



them. In hindsight, it was too early to be doing that."

Gray sought some advice from Flintoff, but as he was literally treading new ground, much of his work came down to trial and error.

"We were always coming up with theories," he says. "At that time we knew the pitches would crack at some point during a four-day game but it was a case of trying to ensure that process happened as late as possible."

"We got the pitches for those India and Lancashire games too dry, they were uneven and a problem."

"That was the worst time and I try not to remember it! If I could do one thing again it would be to use the heavy roller on the square a lot earlier than

we did."

"We probably should have started to roll it as soon as it was laid. The ground was built in 1997 but we didn't play on it till 2000 and I thought leaving it to mature on its own until then was the best thing to do."

Gradually, the Rose Bowl pitches improved. Midway through the 2003 season, Hampshire won after following on against Glamorgan.

"When that happened I thought we were going in the right direction," says Gray. "And when John Crawley started to score a lot of runs on a regular basis that also gave me hope that things were getting better."

Since then, Gray has prepared pitches for no fewer than 16 Ageas Bowl inter-

nationals, including 13 ODIs.

"We produced good pitches for one-day cricket from the start but the first one-day international [South Africa v Zimbabwe in 2003] was a steep learning curve – I may have left it grassier than I should have done," he says.

Gray's attention to detail culminated in the success of West End's inaugural Test match, between England and Sri Lanka last June.

He was lauded by all and sundry for the quality of the surface, as well as his team's efforts during the rain-affected match.

It was, without question, the highlight of his career so far.

"I knew it was going to be a good pitch, it felt right from the start," he smiles.

"Sometimes you just know when a pitch is going to play well, it felt flat and hard."

"But it would have been nice to have had five days' play!"

The Test pitch is one of nine out of 20 on the main square that includes more sand in its loam than the others (a successful formula happened upon as part of an ECB experiment).

There have still been anomalies, with the pitch used for Lancashire's visit a decade ago not the only one to cost Hampshire points.

Hampshire began last season's T20 competition with minus two because of a mischievous wicket "demonstrating excessive unevenness" used for a televised Twenty20 group game against Somerset two years ago.

"That was a one-off, something went wrong in the preparation and to this day I still don't know what," says Gray.

But two months later, Hampshire enjoyed one of the most memorable occasions in the county's history, winning the 2010 Twenty20 final against



Clarke aiming to get Australia back to the top

CAPTAIN Michael Clarke was not getting carried away over Australia's chances of regaining the number one Test ranking after their series triumph in the Caribbean, accepting his side still had a long way to go.

Ex-Hampshire star Clarke, pictured above, bagged a five-wicket haul as Australia concluded their tour with a 75-run win over West Indies in the third and final Test in Dominica to clinch a 2-0 series victory.

Since their tour of South Africa, Australia have lost just one of nine Tests and are now up to third in the Test rankings, but Clarke insisted the number one mantle was still a distant dream.

"We as players don't consider ourselves as the number one Test team but we know that is a goal we're working to," he said.

"I think we're ranked third now, so I still think we're a way off that. We need a lot of improvement to become the number one team."

"It's not just about one series or one summer – it's consistency that gets you to be the number one ranking."

Clarke pinpointed Australia's last-gasp win over South Africa in the second Test in November – one of his first tours as captain following Ricky Ponting's resignation – as the turning point leading to their recent run of results.

"To be able to pull off a win in Johannesburg, and we're talking about a very strong Test cricket team in their own backyard, so to be able to level that series was a great learning curve for us," he said.

"I've really enjoyed it (the captaincy). I've been very lucky to have some other great leaders around me as well as wonderful support staff. The captain is only as good as his stock. They put me in a position to be able to take a risk or declare, and that's only because I have confidence in them."

"I don't want to be a one Test wonder. I want a chance to show the last one was no fluke."

Somerset under the Ageas Bowl's floodlights. Gray played a starring role and not just for ensuring all three games were completed, despite the rain.

With Jimmy Adams on as Dan Christian's runner, a global audience saw him scamper on with his white paint to extend the crease markings in the dramatic final over.

Gray has also seen Hampshire win Lord's finals but there is one trophy he would love to see back at the county before he retires.

He was a student hoping to go into town planning on one of his early visits to Northlands Road in August 1973, when Hampshire beat nearest rivals Northants to take a giant step towards their second and most recent County Championship.

As well as seeing Hampshire recapture that crown, Gray has another goal in his sights.

"I don't want to be a one Test wonder!" he laughs. "I need to knock out another Test match wicket to prove the last one was no fluke!"

India's return in 2014 will be the perfect opportunity for Gray to put to rest the gremlins of 2002, once and for all.

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Local Cricket Spotlight



HAMPSHIRE 2ND XI/ACADEMY: Defeated South Wilts in last weekend's twenty20 at Bemerton. Standing (from left): Adam Rouse, Sean Terry, Tom Barber, James Haison, Ryan Scott, Matt King. Seated: Jack Sheppard, Jake George, James Haggerty, Robert Gibson, Lewis McManus.

Teenage kicks: Academy quartet make the on-field headlines

NEW Hampshire Academy manager Bobby Parks is licking his lips at the prospect of watching some of the county's exciting talent develop during the summer months.

Parks has taken over Tony Middleton's role as academy director and has inherited almost all of the Hampshire junior age group side which lifted the ECB Under-17 County Cup last season, writes **MIKE VIMPANY**.

His young charges had their first run out of the season in the freezing cold at Bemerton last Sunday, where a youthful county team helped South Wilts celebrate the opening of the Salisbury club's superb £1.3m clubhouse and pavilion.

But while South Wilts celebrated off the field, the

Hampshire were toasting success on it.

Two batsmen and two bowlers certainly caught the eye.

Ventnor-raised Jake George, who won the Southern Electric Premier League's prestigious Young Cricketer award last season, struck a fluent 54 at the top of the order - he certainly punished the bad ball, while his Portsmouth Grammar School teammate Robert Gibson smacked a quick-fire 50 as Hampshire posted a daunting 170-6 in 20 overs.

South Wilts were torn apart by pace duo Tom Barber and Matt King.

The 16-year old Barber really could be one to watch for the future.

The Parley left-arm, who took 14 Premier

League wickets for the Academy last season, has put on a yard of pace over the winter and helped himself to four wickets for just five runs in his four-over spell.

King returned 3-14 as South Wilts sank to 32-6 before a breezy half-century by Rob Franklin lifted their disappointing reply to 92.

The Academy, who were due to play Ventnor in a 50-over warm-up this weekend, ironically start their Premier League programme against South Wilts on the Ageas Bowl Nursery Ground next Saturday, 1pm.

They make their Southern Electric twenty 20 Cup bow against Portsmouth on Sunday (2pm), again on the Nursery Ground.

EELS LEGEND BEGINS NEW CAREER CHAPTER

Mixed emotions as Goldstraw joins Sarisbury

DAN Goldstraw has called time on his cricket career with Totton & Eling after 12 seasons and a staggering 393 Southern Electric Premier League wickets.

The evergreen left-arm medium-pace bowler has joined his former Eels captain David Banks at Sarisbury Athletic, newly promoted into Division 2 for the upcoming season.

Goldstraw, one of the area's best known recreational cricketers, said that he was "a bit gutted" to be leaving Southern Gardens.

"I loved playing there, pretty much every minute of it, and helping the club win three Premier titles in four years in the mid-2000s was obviously a bit special," he said.

But he is keen to put something back into cricket and with former Alton all-rounder Dave Taylor being appointed player/coach at Totton, he felt it was probably time to move on.

"I captained Totton & Eling's 2nd XI last season and thoroughly enjoyed being on the

■ **By Mike Vimpany**

echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

field helping some talented youngsters improve their game," he added.

"I'm keen to do a lot more cricket coaching and that opportunity has presented itself at Sarisbury, who have colts coming out of their ears and are running six Saturday league sides, which is fantastic.

'Link with the past'

"Sometimes you need to move to do that effectively, and I was probably too much of a link with the past at Totton, and too close to that team of the past."

"I really hope - and believe they will - move forward more effectively without me clogging up stuff."

Goldstraw joined Totton & Eling (then BAT Sports) when the Southern Electric Premier League was formed in 2000 and won the Premier Division bowling prize in 2001 and again in 2002.

He was frequently in the top

five wicket-takers in the SPL and his career-best return of 8-29 against Calmore Sports in 2003 has only been bettered by three other bowlers.

His tally of 19 separate five-wicket hauls is a league record.

In all, Goldstraw played in four Premier Division championship winning sides at Southern Gardens.

Two seasons ago he took the decision to drop down and help Totton's youngsters mature in Division 3 cricket.

Now he is set for a new phase of his career with Sarisbury Athletic, where he will join former Totton teammates David Banks and Archie Norris in a side which finished runners-up to Old Tauntonians & Romsey last season.

Sarisbury Athletic make their Division 2 bow against Liphook & Ripsley at Allotment Road, next Saturday, May 5.

PASTURES NEW: Dan Goldstraw has joined Sarisbury Athletic.



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Local Cricket Spotlight



Blowers on full ...

HENRY Blofeld, one of broadcasting's most distinctive voices, was the guest speaker at South Wilts' pre-season lunch to officially open the magnificent new clubhouse and pavilion at Bemerton.

The veteran broadcaster, pictured below, enthralled the audience, which included the Hampshire and South Wilts teams, with uproarious stories from the commentary box as well as others about his wide circle of friends who range from *Dad's Army* actor Clive Dunn through Noel Coward and Ian Fleming, who pinched his name for James Bond's arch enemy.

It was evident that 'Blowers', as he is fondly known, has a tremendous zest for life; his broadcasts are always lively and full of humour and he is famous for the way in which he paints the picture for listeners omitting no detail, down to the pigeons, aeroplanes, red buses and helicopters.

He certainly didn't disappoint at Bemerton ...



SEPL BRACED FOR FIXTURE CHAOS

THE Southern Electric Premier League is bracing itself for fixture chaos – before a ball is even bowled in earnest this season.

Eight local sides are scheduled to play ECB Kingfisher Cup national knockout cup first round ties on Sunday (April 29) but with grounds waterlogged across the region and even more rain forecast, prospects of play are virtually nil, writes MIKE VIMPANY.

That means the five ties, which involve the likes of Bashley (Rydal), South Wilts and Totton & Eling, will all have to be rescheduled – and that will throw the Premier League's own twenty20 competition into chaos.

ECB accredited Premier Leagues have been forced to bring forward their domestic t20s to slot in with the ECB's own tournament.

That means the Southern Electric Cup, which has a floodlight Ageas Bowl final, has to be played far earlier than the league ideally wants – starting on Sunday week!

Eight first round ties, including the Hampshire Academy's debut, are scheduled for May 6, but with the Kingfisher Cup taking priority, some of the SEt20 Cup ties will have to take a back seat.

The extreme weather has all but washed out pre-season friendly cricket and the large majority of clubs will go into next Saturday's Southern Premier and Hampshire League openers having had virtually no middle practice.

But if it rains much more, some teams might still be struggling to play next weekend ...

QUOTES of the week

"This is a very good time to be a snooker player. It's not a good time to be an idiot" – World Snooker chairman Barry Hearn, as the governing body consider disciplinary measures against Mark Allen.

"Obviously I didn't repay them too well by coming away with a victory but it was nice that both sets of fans today gave me the reception that I was really rather hoping for" – West Brom manager Roy Hodgson thanks Liverpool fans for their reception on his return to Anfield. Albion won the game 1-0.

"Tell me how it is going to affect me? I couldn't care less. It makes no difference to my life whatsoever – and good luck collecting the money. It's a joke. It is very harsh on Rangers. I am surprised at how harsh the SFA have been on a club which is going through tough times at the moment. Stewart Regan (chief executive) and Campbell Ogilvie (president) should resign and get out of Scottish football. The SFA want to kick Rangers when they are down and I hope people remember that. They are playing to the media" – Rangers owner Craig Whyte after being banned for life by SFA.

"In all honesty you don't want him getting a safety game just yet, you want him scaring the life out of people" – Stephen Maguire salutes gung-ho Belgian teenager Luca Breel after their first-round meeting at snooker's World Championship.

"Matters of that nature are for the BBC but it seemed rather unusual" – Royal & Ancient chief executive Peter Dawson, pictured, appears far from convinced by former England cricket captain Michael Vaughan's role in the BBC's recent Masters golf coverage.



"When you pick a player, it's like picking a wife or a husband and that's no exact science" – St Louis Rams general manager Les Snead gets caught up in the excitement ahead of the NFL draft.

Daily Echo



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LATE AVAILABILITY COACH HOLIDAYS

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20 May : Nottingham, Peak District & Lincoln 5 day	£289
20 May : Bournemouth at Leisure 6 day	£239
21 May : Folkestone, Dover Castle & Brugge 5 day	£269
21 May : Torquay Steam & Sail 5 day	£247
25 May : Paris City Break 4 day	£259
26 May : Welsh Coast – Barmouth 8 day	£476
27 May : Northumbria 6 day	£409
28 May : Llandudno & Snowdonia 5 day	£319
28 May : Rhyl, Snowdonia & Chester 5 day	£217
28 May : A Cornish Gem 5 day	£365
28 May : Snowdonia & Little Trains 5 day	£358
28 May : A Cornish Delight 5 day	£269
01 Jun : Heart of England Singles Break 5 day	£309
01 Jun : Italy – Diana Marina All Inclusive 10 day	£779
02 Jun : Lake Garda and Venice 9 day	£649
03 Jun : Jersey, Guernsey & Sark 7 day	£679
03 Jun : Cotswolds & Nostalgic Steam 5 day	£319
03 Jun : Blackpool and The Lakes 6 day	£309
03 Jun : Disneyland Paris 4 day	£282
04 Jun : Ludlow & The Shropshire Hills 5 day	£358
04 Jun : North Devon – Bideford 5 day	£246
04 Jun : English Lakes 5 day	£339
04 Jun : Warners Thoresby Hall 5 day	£425
08 Jun : Spain – Santa Susana 10 day	£569
09 Jun : Gardens of Cornwall 8 day	£499
10 Jun : Jersey by Sea 8 day	£498
10 Jun : London Eye & Thames Cruise 2 day	£129
10 Jun : The Somme 5 day	£399
10 Jun : Picturebook German Medley 6 day	£469
11 Jun : Pembrokeshire Coast 5 day	£329
11 Jun : Lake District & Mountain Goat 5 day	£429
13 Jun : Green Spain - Cantabria 7 day	£447
15 Jun : Austria - 3 Countries 10 day	£699
15 Jun : Costa Brava - Roses - 10 day	£619
16 Jun : Morecambe & The Lakes 8 day	£499
16 Jun : Summer in the Isle of Wight 8 day	£514
17 Jun : Shetland and Royal Deeside 7 day	£699
17 Jun : Ferry Cross The Mersey 6 day	£4099

Contact us now for full details

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Advertisement Feature

How To Choose The Right Diet For Your Puppy

The right, high-quality nutrition will help support healthy growth and development in your puppy.

- Opt for a complete diet formulated for growth to ensure that your puppy gets all the vital nutrients they need at the right levels. There is no need to add any supplements or extras to a complete diet, and in fact this can unbalance the ration.
- Choose a diet tailored to your puppy's size. Dogs of different sizes can vary in growth rate, life expectancy, energy needs and digestive capacity, all influencing their nutritional specificities. Royal Canin tailored health nutrition products account for your puppy's size and even breed to offer the most precise formulation for them, supporting optimum health and development.
- Health nutrition incorporates special nutrients such as antioxidants to help support the puppy's natural defences and prebiotics to promote the development of healthy gut bacteria.

- Follow the feeding guidelines for growth carefully, monitoring your puppy's body condition and growth rate. Ask your vet for advice if you are unsure.



Focus On: Calcium and Phosphorus

Calcium is an element which is required in large amounts by the body. 99% of the calcium in the body is stored in the skeleton where, together with phosphorus, it keeps bones strong. Both nutrients also have multiple other roles in the body.

Growing animals have large requirements for these minerals - the skeleton is growing rapidly and solidifying as the soft cartilage of growing bones becomes hard. However, excesses of these minerals can be just as detrimental as deficiencies, and it is essential that diets for growing animals have the calcium and phosphorous levels carefully balanced. The ratio of calcium to phosphorous is just as important as the amount. An unbalanced diet, with too much or too little calcium or phosphorous, in the wrong ratio, can contribute to skeletal abnormalities in growing animals. In particular, it is important to remember that the requirement for calcium and phosphorous varies depending on growth rate and mature body weight - that is, a small breed dog which reaches its adult body weight at a young age has a very different requirement to a giant breed dog which can take 2 years to reach adult body weight.

The levels of calcium, phosphorus and all vital nutrients in Royal Canin's diets for growing animals are carefully checked to ensure they are properly balanced. A diet with the correct levels of these nutrients, in the correct ratio, will contribute to healthy, steady growth for your young pet.

FAQs:

• When does my pet start teething?

Puppies will begin teething at 3.5months of age, and all teeth will have been replaced by around 7months of age. Kittens begin teething at 3months of age, with all adult teeth in place by 6months of age.

• How do I change my pet's diet?

It is important to introduce pets onto a new diet gradually in order to help avoid the possibility of digestive upset, particularly in puppies. We suggest:

- Mix 25% of your new diet with 75% of your pet's previous diet for 2 or 3 days
- Then mix the two diets 50% and 50% for 2 or 3 days
- Then mix 75% of the new diet with 25% of the previous diet for 2 or 3 days
- You can now try feeding with 100% of the new diet.

• How does microchipping work?

Microchipping is the painless insertion of a microchip under the skin of the neck. If your pet is ever lost or injured while away from home, any vet or rescue organisation will be able to 'read' their chip with a handheld scanner meaning that your pet can be reunited with you quickly.

Your vet can perform the procedure at any of your routine appointments, and it literally takes just seconds to make your pet identifiable for life.

Puppy love – how to choose the perfect pooch

As dogs remain one of the UK's most popular pets, vet Gudi Stuttard discusses why they make such great companions and how to choose the right puppy for you.

It is often said that we are a nation of animal lovers and it certainly seems that a great number of us now choose to share our lives with a pet. Rabbits and other 'small furries' are on the increase and cats now share the top spot with their canine counterparts. However, it seems that the classic family dog still holds a very dear place in our hearts, with nearly one quarter of UK households having a dog.

It is no surprise that dogs are such a popular choice – it is for good reason that they are often referred to as 'man's best friend' (suggestions please for a more inclusive and politically correct alternative). While there is delightful diversity within the species, dogs are generally renowned for being loyal, forming strong bonds with their human companions and giving a real sense of friendship. Being social animals they integrate well within human households and lifestyles, given the right socialisation. And with a great ability to learn, they are highly trainable pets, although some individuals catch on more quickly than others!

Ownning a dog seems to be of benefit to us too. The daily need for exercise gives us a great opportunity to get out and about, meeting other owners and keeping ourselves fit in the process. And studies have shown that keeping a pet actually benefits our health and wellbeing, with pet owners showing better survival rates after heart attacks, having lower blood pressures and visiting their GP less often for example.

Children can also benefit from growing up with a happy, well-adjusted dog in the family. It seems that pet-owning children have fewer days off school through illness and are less likely to suffer from allergies later on. Pets also seem to have a positive influence on social and emotional development too.

You may already be a proud owner of one of the estimated 8 million pet dogs in the UK, but if not, perhaps you are considering getting a puppy at some stage. Of course, this is not a decision to be made lightly – there is no denying that owning a dog is a major commitment and there are a number of important considerations first.

You need to think about whether you have the time to devote to a dog. Their social nature brings with it a need for regular interaction with people and, with obesity just as much of a problem in dogs as in humans, several daily periods of exercise are necessary. Consider your finances too – can you afford the costs of



IMAGE: Australian Shepherd by Frederic Duhayer

feeding, boarding whilst you are away, pet insurance to cover treatment for disease or injury and the regular costs of routine veterinary procedures? Let's face it, it's simply unfair to take on a dog if you are unable to pay to help keep it healthy and treat it when it is unwell.

Socialisation and training are a vital part of dog ownership, particularly during puppyhood. No one wants to deal with a badly behaved dog, and an unfriendly dog of any size is an unpredictable danger. So it is imperative that you are willing to spend time getting your new puppy used to as many different people, places, animals and situations as possible from an early age - once past the age of 16 weeks this becomes much more difficult. A good training programme, ideally initiated in puppy classes then continued for life, helps ensure that your dog is easily handled and controlled when out and about.

So this is not a spur of the moment thing. Take time, discuss it with the rest of the household and when you feel it is right for you, next consider where you will get your new dog. Unfortunately it is a reality that there are plenty of unwanted puppies and dogs waiting at rescue centres for new homes so these can be a great place to start. Staff will thoroughly assess your needs and find the right second-chance dog for you. You may find a purebreed rescue dog, particularly through specific breed rescue charities, or you may discover a truly individual mixed breed.

If it is a purebreed puppy you are after do choose your breed carefully and try not to be led first and foremost by appearance or fashion. It is worth doing a bit of research – find out about the breed you are interested in and whether it is suitable for your lifestyle. Think about the size it will grow to and consider whether you have the space for a german shepherd for example. Have you got the time to give a springer spaniel the exercise it needs or allow a border collie to work or do agility? Are you able to spend up to an hour a day grooming an Afghan Hound?

For a purebreed puppy, you will need to find a good breeder. Ask lots of questions and get to know them before you decide to buy. Make sure you can visit the puppies and see them with their mother before committing. The Kennel Club is a great source of information on choosing the right dog and breeder.

As the exciting day approaches to bring your new puppy home, ensure you are prepared for their arrival. Have their bed, food and water bowls and a few safe toys to hand. Make sure you have a small supply of the food the breeder was giving and avoid any diet changes until they are fully settled in. Register at a good veterinary practice as soon as possible in case you need to contact them suddenly and to arrange for that all-important first check-up. When you first visit the practice you will have plenty of time to discuss subjects such as flea and worm treatments, vaccinations, neutering, microchipping and pet insurance.

Making the decision to get a puppy or a dog is a really exciting step and will no doubt lead to many years of fun and companionship, benefitting the whole family. Just like so many things, being as prepared and informed as possible is the best way to ensure things run smoothly and get the most from your new best friend.



IMAGE: Brittany Spaniel by Frederic Duhayer



IMAGE: Havanese by Frederic Duhayer

For a whole host of information on caring for your new puppy, visit <http://mypuppyguide.royalcanin.co.uk/> and subscribe to the Royal Canin newsletter.

 **ROYAL CANIN**

Barclays Premier League

Everton	4	Fulham	0
Jelavich 7 pen, 40 Fellaini 16, Canhut 60 HT 3-0		Att 31,885	
Notwich	1	L Liverpool	L
HT 1-1			
Stoke	1	Arsenal	1
Crouch 9 HT 1-1		van Persie 15 Att 27,502	
Sunderland	2	Bolton	2
Bentnor 36 McClean 55 HT 1-1		K Davies 26,70 Att 40,768	
Swansea	4	Wolves	4
Orlandi 1 Allen 4 Dyer 15 Graham 31 HT 4-2		Fletcher 28 Jarvis 33,69 Edwards 54 Att 19,408	
W.B.A.	0	A. Villa	0
HT 0-0		Att 25,984	
Wigan	4	Newcastle	0
Moses 13,15, Maloney 36 Di Santo 45 HT 4-0		Att 22,187	

Colchester	4	Tranmere	2
Henderson 4, Eastman 46 Goodison 66 og Sears 84		Wallace 92 Cassidy 72	
HT 1-0		Att 4,061	
Hartlepool	2	Leyton O	1
Noble 73		Campbell-Ryce 34	
HT 1-1		Att 4,502	
Preston	2	Charlton	2
Alexander 90 HT 0-2		Haynes 11 N. Guessan 35 Att 12,029	
Rochdale	1	M K Dons	2
Akpa Akpro 85		O Shea 3 Bowditch 58 Att 2,212	
HT 0-1		HT 0-1	
Scunthorpe	1	CHERRIES	1
Thompson 79		McDermott 42 Att 4,422	
Sheff Utd	1	Stevenage	L
HT L-L		Att 4,563	
Walsall	1	Huddersfld	1
Cuvelier 49 Browsey 17 pen Bentnor 68 HT 2-2		Novak 2 Att 4,646	
Wycombe	3	Notts Cnty	4
Bloomfield 1 Browsey 17 pen Bentnor 68 HT 2-2		Bogdanovic 3 Judge 40,90 Adebola 89 Att 5,947	
Wycombe are relegated.		Chesterfield are relegated.	
Yeovil	3	Chesterfld	2
Blizard 26, Agard 73 Williams 80 HT 1-1		Bowery 8 Whitaker 69 Att 4,563	

HOME	AWAY
P W	D L F A W D L F A P t
Man Utd	35 14 2 2 50 19 12 3 2 36 13 83
Man City	35 16 1 0 51 10 9 4 5 36 17 80
Arsenal	36 12 3 2 36 14 8 3 7 32 30 66
Newcastle	35 11 5 2 29 15 7 3 7 24 31 62
Spurs	34 11 3 3 35 17 6 5 6 22 22 59
Chelsea	34 10 3 3 33 26 6 7 5 23 18 58
Everton	35 9 3 6 25 14 5 6 6 21 24 51
Liverpool	34 5 9 3 6 24 15 1 7 9 20 21 56
Fulham	35 6 9 3 6 24 15 3 5 6 23 46
W.B.A.	36 6 9 19 19 7 4 7 22 28 46
Sunderland	36 7 7 4 26 16 4 5 9 18 27 45
Swansea	36 7 7 4 26 18 4 10 17 31 44
Norwich	35 6 6 5 26 27 5 4 9 21 33 43
Stoke	35 7 6 4 22 17 4 10 11 32 43
A. Villa	36 4 6 8 19 24 3 10 5 17 26 37
Wigan	36 4 7 7 19 25 5 3 10 19 35 37
Q.P.R.	35 6 5 7 23 25 3 2 12 16 32 34

HOME	AWAY
P W	D L F A W D L F A P t
Charlton	45 14 6 2 43 18 15 5 3 36 16 98
Sheff Wed	45 16 4 2 46 19 11 5 7 33 29 90
HT 1-1	
Shifft Utd	44 16 3 3 52 25 11 4 7 36 22 88
M K Dons	45 12 6 4 45 21 10 8 5 39 25 80
Huddersfld	45 13 6 3 33 19 7 12 4 44 28 78
Notts Cnty	45 12 5 5 38 28 9 5 10 33 34 79
Stevenage	44 9 10 3 33 23 8 8 6 31 19 69
Carlisle	45 12 7 4 41 30 6 8 8 23 34 69
Brentford	45 10 6 7 36 24 7 7 8 24 26 64
Colchester	45 8 11 4 38 33 5 9 8 22 29 59
Hartlepool	45 6 6 11 21 22 8 8 6 27 30 56
Bury	45 8 7 7 31 32 7 3 12 29 44 56
Tranmere	45 9 10 3 26 15 5 3 15 22 37 55
CHERRIES	45 8 5 9 22 23 6 8 9 25 25 55
Preston	45 7 9 7 30 35 6 10 24 32 54
Yeovil	45 10 3 10 34 41 4 9 9 25 37 54
Scunthorpe	45 10 8 28 33 5 11 6 26 25 51
Oldham	45 8 5 9 24 25 5 7 11 24 40 51
Walsall	45 7 9 7 27 27 2 11 9 23 30 47
Leyton O	45 5 6 11 21 33 7 5 11 25 41 47

HOME	AWAY
P W	D L F A W D L F A P t
Walsall	45 12 7 4 41 30 6 8 8 23 34 69
HT 0-0	
Yeovil	45 10 6 7 36 24 7 7 8 24 26 64
Scunthorpe	45 10 8 28 33 5 11 6 26 25 51
Oldham	45 8 5 9 24 25 5 7 11 24 40 51
Walsall	45 7 9 7 27 27 2 11 9 23 30 47
Leyton O	45 5 6 11 21 33 7 5 11 25 41 47

npower Championship

Barnsley	0	Brighton	0
HT 0-0		Att 10,151	
Birmingham	2	Reading	0
Rooney 24, Elliott 75 pen HT 1-0		Att 25,516	
Burnley	1	Bristol C	1
Ings 76 HT 0-0		Taylor 81 Att 13,369	
Crystal P	1	Cardiff	0
Zaha 13 HT 1-0		Whittingham 53 Att 15,510	
Derby Cty	1	Peterboro	1
Robinson 21 HT 1-0		Ball 82 Att 27,354	
Doncaster	2	Ipswich	3
Robert 34 Beye 90 HT 1-2		Smith 10, Stevenson 29 Scotland 79 pen Att 9,764	
Leeds Utd	1	Leicester	1
Webber 82 HT 0-0		Waghorn 39 Panayiotou 90 Att 25,664	
Millwall	2	Blackpool	2
Keogh 12 Kane 83 HT 1-1		Evatt 27 Dicko 71 Att 13,122	
Nott For	2	POMPEY	0
Blackstock 70,89 HT 0-0		Att 23,625	
SAINTS	4	Coventry	0
Sharp 16 Fox 16 Hoover 59 Lallana 63 HT 2-0		Chetnham 78 Soler 46-53 Burgess 71 HT 0-1	
Watford	2	Middlesbro	1
Iwelumo 69 Deeney 88 HT 0-0		Emmes 85 Att 14,022	
West Ham	2	Hull	1
Cole 36,49 HT 1-0		Evans 81 Att 35,000	

HOME	AWAY
P W	D L F A W D L F A P t
Reading	46 14 5 4 36 18 13 3 7 33 23 89
SAINTS	46 16 3 4 39 18 10 6 7 36 28 89
West Ham	46 11 8 4 41 26 13 6 4 40 22 86
Birmingham	46 13 9 1 37 14 7 7 9 41 37 76
Brighton	46 11 8 4 36 21 6 7 10 31 66
Watford	46 10 6 7 32 33 6 7 10 24 51
Derby Cty	46 11 4 6 28 23 7 6 10 22 35 64
Burnley	46 7 9 7 33 27 10 2 11 28 31 62
Leeds Utd	46 9 3 11 34 41 8 7 8 31 27 61
Millwall	46 7 9 27 30 7 8 5 10 28 27 57
Crystal P	46 7 11 5 22 29 6 5 11 24 32 56
Peterboro	46 10 3 10 41 34 8 3 8 12 26 39 50
Nott For	46 5 6 12 21 32 8 3 12 27 31 50
Bristol C	46 7 6 10 26 32 5 7 11 18 36 49
Barnsley	46 9 4 10 31 37 4 5 14 18 37 48

HOME	AWAY
P W	D L F A W D L F A P t
Watford	46 12 4 7 28 22 7 7 9 19 22 68
Leicester	46 11 6 3 6 26 22 7 6 10 30 66
Burnley	46 11 8 4 35 21 6 7 10 31 66
Leeds Utd	46 10 6 7 32 33 6 7 10 24 51
Millwall	46 7 9 27 30 7 8 5 10 28 27 57
Crystal P	46 7 11 5 22 29 6 5 11 24 32 56
Peterboro	46 10 3 10 41 34 8 3 8 12 26 39 50
Nott For	46 5 6 12 21 32 8 3 12 27 31 50
Bristol C	46 7 6 10 26 32 5 7 11 18 36 49
Barnsley	46 9 4 10 31 37 4 5 14 18 37 48

HOME	AWAY
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SAINTS	46 16 3 4 39 18 10 6 7 36 28 89
West Ham	46 11 8 4 41 26 13 6 4 40 22 86
Birmingham	46 13 9 1 37 14 7 7 9 41 37 76
Brighton	46 11 8 4 36 21 6 7 10 31 66
Watford	46 10 6 7 32 33 6 7 10 24 51
Derby Cty	46 11 4 6 28 23 7 6 10 22 35 64
Burnley	46 7 9 7 33 27 10 2 11 28 31 62
Leeds Utd	46 9 3 11 34 41 8 7 8 31 27 61
Millwall	46 7 9 27 30 7 8 5 10 28 27 57
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Peterboro	46 10 3 10 41 34 8 3 8 12 26 39 50
Nott For	46 5 6 12 21 32 8 3 12 27 31 50
Bristol C	46 7 6 10 26 32 5 7 11 18 36 49
Barnsley	46 9 4 10 31 37 4 5 14 18 37 48

HOME	AWAY
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Watford	46 12 4 7 28 22 7 7 9 19 22 68
Leicester	46 11 6 3 6 26 22 7 6 10 30 66
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Leeds Utd	46 10 6 7 32 33 6 7 10 24 51
Millwall	46 7 9 27 30 7 8 5 10 28 27 57
Crystal P	46 7 11 5 22 29 6 5 11 24 32 56
Peterboro	46 10 3 10 41 34 8 3 8 12 26 39 50
Nott For	46 5 6 12 21 32 8 3 12 27 31 50
Bristol C	46 7 6 10 26 32 5 7 11 18 36 49
Barnsley	46 9 4 10 31 37 4 5 14 18 37 48

HOME	AWAY

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